

GOD'S REBEL

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GOD'S REBEL

GOD'S REBEL

BY

HULBERT FULLER

AUTHOR OF "VIVIAN OF VIRGINIA"



BOSTON

L. C. PAGE AND COMPANY (INC.)

1900

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE GAME BEGINS - - - - -	1
II. CHILDHOOD - - - - -	12
III. HINTS AND HELPS FROM MRS. MASON - - - - -	25
IV. THE OLD AND THE NEW - - - - -	35
V. SAFEGUARDS OF LITERATURE - - - - -	44
VI. SUPERSTITION AND FACT - - - - -	58
VII. GOING DOWN! - - - - -	72
VIII. NANNETTE - - - - -	79
IX. TANGENTS AND TYROS - - - - -	90
X. A RECEPTION AND A REMINISCENCE - - - - -	101
XI. A PROFOUND PROBLEM - - - - -	115
XII. REPRESENTATIVE PEOPLE - - - - -	129
XIII. A WINTER AFTERNOON - - - - -	145
XIV. ALL A FORGERY - - - - -	160
XV. THE EVOLUTION OF A GREASE-SPOT - - - - -	175
XVI. THE FAIRY GOD-MOTHER - - - - -	187
XVII. DR. LITTLE IS "POUNCED UPON" - - - - -	197
XVIII. THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD - - - - -	209
XIX. ENVIRONMENTAL FORCES - - - - -	221
XX. MOMENTOUS OCCASIONS - - - - -	232
XXI. THE STRIKE AT WHEELING - - - - -	244
XXII. THE CRIMSON SIGN - - - - -	257
XXIII. FAIRY GOD-MOTHERS AGAIN—AND CINDERELLA	274
XXIV. HER FATAL SLIPPER - - - - -	284
XXV. THE RIGHT TO LIVE - - - - -	296
XXVI. THE VARIETY-SHOW - - - - -	310
XXVII. DOUBTFUL SECURITY - - - - -	323
XXVIII. THE BOND OF NEMESIS - - - - -	336
XXIX. THE GODS SEND WAR - - - - -	351
EPILOGUE - - - - -	367

GOD'S REBEL.

CHAPTER I.

THE GAME BEGINS.

"But," she urged impatiently to the stolid heavy-faced man at her side, "it's the second time it has won! Don't you see how everyone's betting on fourteen?"

"And why?" a faint shadow of a smile flitting athwart his dark features. "What's happened to the sillies now that stampedes them on fourteen?"

"Pshaw!" she began hotly; then paused as her eyes, in company with everyone else's, became fixed on the magic hand of one who was known as a multi-millionaire whilst he scattered his gold generously over the *teens*—"You, a Methodist minister's son, ask me why?"

"My native innocence, you mean," he answered with amusement. "That's why I ask, I suppose."

"No, no! what's the good of inbred superstition if it doesn't tell you that when a number wins twice running it's just bound to win the third time. But there!" she ended dejectedly, as the croupier called out "*Rien ne va plus*;"—"it's too late now. You'll never succeed!"

After all, his excess of superstition, his strong biologic impulse, perhaps, which impelled him to a belief in the infallibilities of the past rather

than to test the uncertainties of the future, saved them, as it had many times before in the brief past of their acquaintance. Still he did not choose at this time meanly to remind her of it. On the contrary, his only expression was one of brute sympathy, as though vainly seeking to know her and sorrowful at the tumbling of her castle, even though he must refuse reverently to shower his gold over the ruins. For the luck had shifted to number thirty-three.

"Faites vos jeux, messieurs."

"Twelve hundred francs, Potiphar, and he bet ten thousand!" she said in amazed half-audible tones.

"Humph, a millionaire," he answered with careless indifference as he reckoned in hard American dollars the amount of the man's losses. "It's nothing to him."

"What did you say?" she asked, but without taking her eyes from the millionaire who, nothing daunted, again sprinkled his gold over the numbers from twelve to fifteen, and carelessly dropped a thousand franc note upon zero.

But again a spiteful three thrust its forked tongue at him, wriggled and curled in electric glee; whilst the croupier raked in the gold, and the millionaire, without a change of expression, rolled on his way swaying in splendid insouciance.

"Who is he, Potiphar?" she asked.

"The president of the Wheeling Car Works," answered the solid looking gentleman. "I noticed by the *Times* yesterday that his workmen are making trouble and threatening to strike. He's probably trying to forget it."

"Oh," and her eyes returned to the game. "But he left too soon," she expostulated, with feminine irrelevancy. "This is the second time it has skipped

the teens. And the third time, Potiphar, you know—" She smiled bewitchingly.

"Yes, my dear, I know," replied he of the Egyptian title, but in a manner to denote his complete indifference to the art of conjury. "I left my purse at the hotel."

"Faites vos jeux, messieurs," chanted the croupier.

"Oh, if I only had a napoleon!" she pouted, and turned her pretty head, so that the words came as a petition not lightly to be refused, into the ears of a young gentleman standing close behind her.

"If you would oblige me," he murmured, placing the coin in her hand, causing the splendid dark eyes to open wide with surprise and then dance with mischief as she thanked him, "For good luck," and placed the coin on the number fourteen.

And this time it won; there was no disputing it; third time and all. Even Potiphar was forced to smile in odd amazement, as the crowd drew a deep breath of relief that said audibly, "I told you so," at this gratifying example of the no-freak of fortune.

"Shall we go now, Enid?" he asked, weariness of the scene manifest in his voice.

"Oh no; impossible! See? we are partners." And she half closed one eye an instant indicating the young man who had stood behind them and loaned his napoleon, and who was now coolly placing their wager just won over the pair, trio, quartette, and transversal including the number fourteen.

"Rein ne va plus!"

Again the monotonous chant closing the lists; the sing-song creak of the hinges of Fortune's door in the strained faces of the multitude; the same faces, forsooth, that have looked on or taken part

in our universal gamble since the world began—princes and lords who, though they possess nothing else, at least display splendid breeding, secure in success or defeat; suave statesmen, men of affairs, greedy gamblers in black, all carelessly rubbing elbows; the poet and musician with rapt expression and long hair, together with sexless creatures in transitional clothes, with a business expression and short hair. And lastly, women; rosebuds and lilies, the flesh of white arms and flashing shoulders in the glaring lights and the stare of men; the good, the sinful, the spotless, the guilty; fair frail women whom men love for their very frailty, together with stark sufficient women—bereft of frailty, but as yet possessing nothing quite so sweet or feminine to fill its place—whom men are trying to learn to love; women pure and pale, painted and wanton, but nevertheless, women as they have always been and will probably never be found wanting.

Nor is the game itself in any sense different from what it has ever been; no, merely the same old round wherein the grand croupier dykes in the vast ocean of gold, sprinkling now and then a few drops from the tips of his fingers upon the heads of the grateful but clamorous populace; sometimes, it is true, to the accompaniment of religious ceremonies and the tune of "it is better to give than to receive," and sometimes without this mockery. Yet the splendid perspective of the roulette table never grows tiresome, either to player or to the onlooking historian. A vast green sea freighted with golden ships, now quiet, now tempest-tossed, and anon swept clean by a gale; and then again placable, calm, aye, grandly pacific, so that the mind gropes instinctively backward into the past and the eye peers far out over the moonlit sea, till lo! Charlemagne himself comes sailing into view, and we behold him not unjustly

in the guise of the first grand croupier of Monaco. Yet another turn of the wheel and the Saracens come up, with flashing scimitars, scattering the early Christians to the four winds. Then the clouds lower, as the rocky stronghold becomes lost and won in turn by Germany, Genoa, Milan—the prey and the home alike of pirate and despot; but ever smiling with the sunrise, singing through the day with the music at her feet, and blushing like a maiden in the rose light of sunset, until France, passionate wooer of nations, by obtaining Nice and Savoy, embraces her with a protecting arm.

Still the game never ceases; and as there are no gamblers like women, so too there is none like Monaco, the gem and the bride of France. With the advent of Honore V. and his calculating croupier, Francois Chappon, fresh zest is lent to the play. Grain is the stake, and Honore V. keeps it well locked up in his own granaries. Nor must the housewife bake her own bread save under fear of dire penalty, for Honore is a thoughtful despot and has his own bakers employed to bake bread for his people; sometimes, it is true, out of condemned flour bought at Genoa and Marseilles. Whilst, still provident, he compels his bakers to keep an official register of their families and report whether or not they are eating the proper number of loaves. If perchance they are not, they must either be fined or imprisoned; for Honore must sell his bread, poor fellow! it being his only means of subsistence.

One time, so it is rumoured, a ship came sailing into the harbour with a fat captain and a well fed crew. At once the croupier's suspicions were inflamed; therefore a search was made, and lo! deep down in the hold of the vessel was found an ancient loaf that everyone had overlooked when throwing the ship's bread overboard, as all vessels were com-

pelled to do before entering harbor. The stale loaf was confiscated, conveyed ashore, exhibited to Honore—the ship was seized, and the fat captain barely escaped imprisonment in the dungeon by paying a fine of five hundred francs.

In this manner Honore V. started in life a poor boy, with only a common-school education and naught but a barren rock for inheritance; but by dint of push, hard work, and infinite attention to details, at the end of five years he had accumulated a fortune of six million francs out of a population of less than six thousand people. It reads almost like a romance, as our newspapers would say; so that one instinctively thrills to the regretful thought of what a success he might have achieved had his fortunes only been cast in a happier land, under the shade, let us say, of that famous buttonhole—no, buttonwood!—tree in Wall street.*

But regrets, after all, are idle whilst the play continues; chances still abound, it is alleged, though to some it is strangely pleasing to muse upon the antecedents of the game as the wheel clicks.

"Rein ne va plus!"

The slowing whirr of the wheel under the heavy atmosphere grows fainter and fainter till it stops with a sharp click. Then the murmur of voices begins again amid the clinking of gold, as it flows in a constantly swelling current towards the croupier.

"Why, he has taken it all!"

For a series of turns the two had been steadily winning, and, as success at business invariably begets

*"In 1792," writes an apologist in a well-known magazine, "twenty-seven respectable citizens of New York met under a buttonwood tree in Wall Street and formed an association for the buying and selling of stocks, of whose widespread beneficence they could at that time have had no adequate conception."

good feeling among the gamblers, they had been chatting together gaily, brilliantly. Now, however, there was a ring of remonstrance in her tone; she looked up at her partner, her face still flushed, but this time with indignation. Whilst he, with a heedless laugh and keeping his eyes intent upon her face as though bewildered and fascinated with its beauty, replied:

"No, not all. See? He has left us our wager—from courtesy, perhaps;" and he held up a napoleon. "Shall we continue?"

"But our five thousand francs?" she began, fervently, then faltered, and flashed him a smile. "Oh dear! It seemed so real. Thank you; I don't care to play again." And, turning to the man behind her, she added, "Potiphar, give him our cards. Don't you see he's an American?"

The free-masonry of their country's name fetched a smile and an informal word as they exchanged cards; then, the men lifting their hats, they parted and passed on in the moving throng.

The younger man had not taken many steps, however, ere he felt a friendly hand on his shoulder and a familiar "Hello, old man!" close to his ear, which caused him to look up and reply, "Ah, Henry, is that you? I was just about to go in search of you."

"Yes, I saw you were longing for me," said his friend. "I stepped in here a quarter of an hour ago, but found you were pleasantly occupied, and so went out for a stroll. By Jove! but she was a stunner. Where did you pick her up, Kenneth?"

"Who? pick who up?" Kenneth protested quietly as they stepped out into the gardens.

"Why, Delilah; the person I saw you playing with, of course. However, I don't suppose you know her name."

"No, that's right; I don't," Kenneth admitted, pausing to light a cigar. "They gave me their cards, but I've not looked at the names. I know her husband's, though; it's Potiphar."

"Potiphar? Ha! ha! then I wasn't so far off in my name after all."

"No," the other conceded fairly, "Potiphar's wife and Delilah were somewhat closely related, I fancy. However, here it is," and, pausing under the glare of an electric light, he read the card:

"Mr. and Mrs. Potiphar Phillips, Chicago, U. S. A."

"Odd name, very," his companion commented. "Wonder what he does with it?"

"Well, at least he doesn't conjure with it, Henry. For the life of me I can't understand how a man who hasn't sufficient imagination to enjoy gambling can find any pleasure in the society of such a beautiful woman as that wife of his."

"Perhaps he is poor."

"Impossible. Didn't you see what she had on?"

"Had on! No, I confess that I wasn't struck by that exactly." He laughed. "But have you actually observed that it is the imaginative man who gambles?"

"Oh, yes, I think so; the imaginative faculty that permits a few men to get inordinately rich almost always implies the possession in a marked degree of those higher qualities which might have made such men equally famous as poets, astronomers, or in the higher mathematics, had their environment not been limited by ledgers and accounts. Whereas, take a man like this Potiphar, why! he could never become very rich if he tried. He's only a plodder; he has no imagination. Obviously, his wife is a misfit."

"Humph! And the specific cause for this sad state of so many wives is, I suppose——"

"Oh, it's a question of economics, of course. That's the cause of everything bad."

They had strolled to the top of the terraces and now stood gazing a moment out over the glinting sea. The steel-blue light of the waning moon played over the water's superficial restlessness and lit with a tender softness the distant castle of Monaco—the selfsame light that softens the Past, that glorifies the Present, and causes the dark, uncertain sea to forget its treacherous depths in a mirror of loveliness; the mellow glow of romance, sacred in its very superstitions and wrapping the world in a warm mantle of conservatism wherein we sleep, and dream, and protest vigorously against all who dare rudely disturb or awake us.

But ah! 'tis only a borrowed glow after all. We forget that the grim, vulgar reality of yesterday becomes the alleged romance of to-day. We forget that this soft light playing over the moon's scarred face covers naught save a scabrous sepulchre, making all life, all present humanity, seem but an empty dream.

"Win anything, Henry?" asked Kenneth, returning again to the play.

"No; the fact is, old man, now that my time is up in Vienna, and we have had our little excursion, I begin to feel more anxious about the future than I should really care to confess."

"Don't. What's the use?"

"Well, for one thing," he explained, "I met Dr. Blodgett here this very evening—the registrar, you know, of the university's medical department—and he gave me to understand that most of the men who graduated during the past three years have failed to obtain a living practice. Naturally, I don't feel

like gambling, and wish to get home and settle down now quickly as possible."

"Yes, but you forget," Kenneth urged, with laudable conceit, perhaps, "none of these men have had your advantages—besides, the personal equation."

"No, I don't forget it; but it remains to be seen whether the public will care to consider it. Of course, it is different with you. Your place is waiting for you in the university, and every word that you utter in your lecture-room will mark you for what you are from the first. There's no hocus-pocus or quackery in your profession; either what you practice is the truth or it is not; and the general public is at present interested enough to discover it immediately."

"Thank you; I confess that I trust so; only don't be cast down, Henry, by what that old codger said to you. Why, I'd wager ten years of my life that you will succeed. As for starting home, I'm ready whenever you say."

"Suppose we sail Wednesday, then; or, no, we should have to leave here on the first train in the morning, and I wish to see Blodgett again."

"Very well," his friend answered, "I'll go on the early train and complete all arrangements, and you can come later. Will that be satisfactory?"

The following morning, accordingly, found Kenneth Moore off for Paris by the early express. Yet was there something incongruous in the hasty flight of the train back into the world of everyday thought and affairs, considering that nearly three months had elapsed in which he had heard nothing by telegraph, letter, or newspaper of the world at large. But long absence—six months in Göttingen, followed by a year in Berlin in active study in his profession—had served somewhat to silence the old

yearning and impatience for home, so that upon joining his friend, Dr. Henry Holden, in Vienna some three months ago, they had hastily made arrangements for a trip to the Orient before returning to America. It scarcely seemed worth while to cable home of their newly formed plans; accordingly they merely wrote advising their correspondents to direct letters to Paris, where they would pick them up on their return.

Arriving in Paris, he went direct to his bankers, where he was given a bundle of letters, which, the clerk stated, had been accumulating for several weeks. Thence, hurrying along the boulevard, he entered a café and found a seat at a table in a remote alcove. Opening the first letter that came to hand, which was addressed in a familiar hand, "Dr. Kenneth Moore, Paris," he read:

"Dearest Kenneth: Still we hear from you from Rome, Athens, Constantinople, yet you might be dropping your letters to us from Mars so far as the hopeless task of trying to make you hear our replies is concerned. We have cabled; we have written; we have prayed; and there is something strangely pathetic to us in reading your enthusiastic accounts of the sights you have seen and the adventures you are having, whilst at your home has occurred that which would have robbed them of all their pleasure. For, Kenneth—dear Kenneth——!"

He paused; a veil came over his vision, and, though he completed the sentence and groped blindly ahead for a line or two, he was conscious only of a sob at the heart and the mute appeal of his unuttering lips, "My father." A waiter appeared and stood bowing politely. Kenneth did not see him, and the boy disappeared and returned directly with a newspaper. Yes, though monsieur had not granted him the extreme happiness of noticing him,

yet he had obviously performed his part by guessing his country and fetching him his whole kingdom in miniature. Monsieur was sad; homesick, quite probably. See, he could now be at home again. There was the great strike among the starving workmen; the great scandal in Congress; and the great—what you call it—the choke? no, the lynching; and the equally great railway accident that the Americans seem never to tire of. What a vivid imagination these Americans had, that they should persist in trying to make two trains pass each other at full speed on the same track! Sometimes they passed; yes, he admitted it; but sometimes—*Mon Dieu!* it was a queer country where men's lives were cheaper than steel rails. And Jacques, who spoke four languages as fluently as a native, shrugged his shoulders yet more fluently, and told himself positively for the hundredth time, that no! much as he should like to go to America and become ver' rich, there was no satisfaction—no *satisfactshiong*, in running so many chances against violent and sudden death among a barbarous and incomprehensible people.

But monsieur was ver' tired. See, his head was resting on the table. Ah, monsieur was sleepy; he would come and wait on him later.

And Jacques vanished, drawing the curtains softly behind him.

CHAPTER II.

CHILDHOOD.

There come moments of pause in the headlong hurry of youth that send the mind groping swiftly backward into the past, seeking wildly amidst the

storm for that dim, nearly forgotten beginning of first-remembered things, until Time, the victorious, is at last forced to take the retreating step, the while immediate scenes and voices become strangely silenced in the swell of the more remote. Lo! again one stands absorbed in the olden play, seeing the curtain rise and fall, with gladness, a smile upon the lips, as a child: the world and its fair unfolding all as at first, ere Ulysses had journeyed a mile.

"Kenneth! O Kenneth!"

Out of the vanished years the voice commanded, fetching scene and all fresh in his memory as though twenty odd years had not flown, whilst yet he answered, the lad of six.

"Yes, papa."

"Well, come and jump in if you want to ride this morning. No, never mind the school, my lad; there's time enough for that and to spare." And the doctor lifted his hitching-weight into the phaeton, stepped in and drew the reins taut.

"Whoa! wait a moment," he added. "Run into the house, Kenneth, and tell Jennie I'm called out to Mr. Anthony's and that we may not be back to lunch."

"You mean Enid's father's, papa?" asked the boy.

"Yes, run along; be lively." And, beholding the child's eagerness at mention of Enid's name, the doctor laughed, then sighed: "Ah, the course of true love. Dear me!"

Of his mother the child knew nothing at all save what he had learned in later years, she having died at his birth. Knew little, that is, save that she was of foreign extraction, but whether Basque, Spanish, or gypsy, doubtless she herself could not truly have said; indeed, some of the doctor's old neighbors might have told him that his father had practically

married the girl off the street. One night, so it was remembered, Dr. Moore was called to see a patient living in a dingy, dirty apartment over a noisy saloon at the corner of the business street a couple of blocks from his residence. Entering the room, he discovered a girl moaning and lying on the dirty bed, dressed in a soiled and faded silk gown with short sleeves that disclosed one arm lying limp and helpless. A couple of rascally-looking street musicians stood near the bed, one of them still holding his violin by its neck, whilst the other had dropped his flute on the floor and was now attempting to quiet the girl. Replying to the doctor's command to have all particulars, the violinist, after much parleying in Spanish with his companion, put aside his instrument and picked up the flute. "Een zees way, señor," he stammered. "Him her fader; ver' good fader. See? She playa harp, señor, ah! so beautiful; but zees night, no! she no playa mucha good. So her ver' good fader, he taka za flute een zees way, see?" And the rascal took it by one end and fetched the ivory joint down over his extended arm in a manner that left no doubt.

The doctor's eyes flashed. He uttered something abrupt and decisive about "damned dagoes," glanced meaningly at an open window, and the pair fled precipitately down the back stairway. Then, taking the girl in his arms he carried her gently to his own home, mended her broken arm, and for full two years afterwards he would listen with all of a child's delight to that sweetly pathetic voice born of the South and generations of oppression, watching with infinite joy the beautiful arms and tapering fingers caressing the strings of that now silent harp into a song or a chant—and paid for it all with a broken heart when she died. Nor had he chosen to marry again; the balance of his life was given solely to

his practice and the rearing of the son she had left him.

Now, all of this happened before the time of the great fire, which is the way all time is reckoned in the city of Chicago. Before the fire Dr. William Moore was reputed to be wealthy; being one of a considerable number who held approved securities that were shortly to vanish as completely as though never created. The source of wealth, however, remained; not capital, nor schemes of importing such from abroad, but labour and natural resources; that couple which God hath joined, and which man in his infinite foolishness hath temporarily parted—labour that was grand, willing, diversified; of the kind that is able to convert a marsh into a teeming city, or the uninhabited prairie into great fields of ripening grain, though the primitive curse of gold or silver never were known. That capital was in any sense necessary to labour was after the great fire clearly disproved; but that capital took advantage of this superstition in order to multiply itself was not only widely evidenced in Chicago, but in hundreds of other western cities to-day.

But, however these things may be, whether it was because of vast capital or giant labour—which latter shortly created its own capital—that population multiplied, that productivity doubled and trebled, that costly buildings were erected and beautiful boulevards were extended outward over the prairie, Dr. Moore and hundreds of others were never afterwards able to regain their fortunes. And, though the newspapers joyfully stated at the beginning of every new year how rapidly wealth had increased because the price of land had doubled, the only effect that he had been able to grasp was that with every new year his patients seemed to have less and less to pay for medical services. At any rate his collec-

tions had fallen off by ten, thirty, fifty per cent; whilst charity work, which was becoming more and more fashionable among well-meaning people, kept him busier and harder worked than ever; though ever in a spirit of cheerful and good-natured mystery. For to create wealth by the mere arbitrary doubling of land prices, or to expect anything good to result out of the giving of charity to able-bodied people, seemed to him about as senseless in the one case and as purposeless in the other as for him to try to raise his portly person into the air by pulling at his bootstraps.

But Dr. Moore was no specialist in economics, his life being so absorbed in the daily routine of his profession that it had rarely occurred to him that he as an individual must help solve the riddle of the industrial sphinx or be devoured. Yet he had religiously tried to keep pace with the lightning speed of modern industrial society in order to be able to guide Kenneth more truly towards an early and substantial success in life. For success was truly the great desideratum of the age, nor was there any longer the shadow of a doubt as to the strict significance of the term; in sooth, in this day of plutocracy in church and university, for any one to insist that Galileo and Bruno were successful despite their splendid scientific achievements, when the one was burnt at the stake and the other spent the final ten years of his life in prison, were as untenable and as wholly unwarrantable proof of success to-day as then: the power that rules, whether monarch or dollar, or however subtle and chameleon-like be its form, being as ready as ever to crucify or offer the goblet of hemlock to whatsoever priest, poet, or painter that dares to dispute its divinity.

Hence the good doctor had puzzled himself from the days when Kenneth was a mere child in trying to

decide upon the lad's fitness for various careers, though what to make of him only became more urgent and difficult of solution as the days went by. For the lad was peculiar, impressionable to the last degree, and candid to the core; nor did his contact with others in school or college ever serve to stifle such feelings, or to develop those other qualities that young men commonly wear upon their sleeves and that compel the world to remark: "He is smart; he will succeed." On the contrary, aside from a certain pugnacity of disposition which was oddly at variance with his dreamy nature, the lad grew up wedded to books and to music.

A picture of him taken at about the age of fifteen would have shown a striking resemblance to that portrait of Keats; the eyes large, luminous with truth, and somewhat wide apart; the forehead pale and beautiful, and caressed with a cluster of dark red curls; the nose straight and perfect; the mouth sensitive and a trifle large. Some of these features the doctor saw whenever he chanced to look in the glass; others were only a memory to him, causing him to glance at the lad, to turn away, and gaze again. As for his height, it may have added somewhat to the boy's pugnacious spirit, and it certainly tormented him not a little to find, as he grew to manhood, that he was below the medium, being, in fact, scarcely five feet eight. However, the doctor merely smiled at this conceit, telling him that it was a fine thing to be short, as biology would some day prove. "Less legs and more brain, my lad." Yet when walking with his father and being invariably told to "step lively," he had sometimes protested earnestly, and, as he thought, with great cogency. "No, Kenneth," his father corrected, "you have simply to let your legs swing the faster," and referred him to the law governing pendulums.

"Every quick and rapid step will add years to your life."

But when the boy had scarcely entered his teens the doctor had already given up with a heavy sigh the dearest wish of his heart—namely, for his son to succeed him in his practice. Aye, it was impossible; he knew it now; and, as the days grew on he began to doubt whether the lad would ever succeed at anything that people called practical without his own or somebody's else miraculous intervention. For not only was the lad's blood foreign—and the doctor scarce blamed him for that—but there were foreign thoughts in his head and foreign instincts in his heart and foreign conclusions in his mind; foreign, that is, to modernity and America; causing the father to ponder with despair upon this alien infection which had crept into his child at babyhood and waxed ever stronger with the years. In-somuch that by the time Kenneth had quit college the doctor knew indubitably that his son was wedded in every fibre and cell to the literature and science of the Ptolemys of Alexandria, of the Khalifs of Bagdad, the impregnate Latins of Andalusia—sad heretics, all of them. Whilst the sounds that went singing round the old house from his son's violin, or anon the deep-drawn wail of the cello under the slow bow of a master's hand and a lover's touch, and which found a mournful echo in the silent harp in the corner, would oft catch the doctor upon the very threshold as he returned to his home from some sick-bed, and fetch the tears to his eyes for more reasons than one—alas! for more reasons than one.

Ah, these children; these children!

Howbeit, this drive to the Anthonys with his father was one of the child's earliest fixed memories. It was in the spring of the year; the sunlight fell athwart the face of the city, causing it to wear a

smile after the long cold winter; on the great lake the boats were making their regular trips up and down, whilst the tugs in the river were industriously belching their dirty black smoke over the new granite buildings. But southward the parks and the lawns seemed never so green and refreshing; children played over the grass; there were fine houses, with hospitable porches and broad lawns, where young ladies in summer dresses amused themselves with the then fashionable game of croquet, and shady avenues where nurse girls in white caps wheeled those younger scions of the vigorous city who were some day to devote their lives to the acquisition of dollars in accordance with the very loftiest traditions of their fathers and the fittest of the whole human race.

Some five or six miles out, close to the shore of the lake, a gentleman stood waiting on the porch of his house as they drove in; calling out, with a quick note of relief in his voice:

"Ah, here you are, doctor, at last! I'm very glad to see you, I'm sure. My wife began to get impatient—feared you couldn't come."

The doctor stepped out of his phaeton. "What's the trouble, Hiram; anything in particular?"

"No, of course not; that's the deuce of it," irritation audible in his voice. "It's only another of those miserable headaches. Too much society. For heaven's sake, doctor, tell her she's wearing the life out of herself and me and all of us with so blamed much nonsense! Besides, it costs money."

The doctor laughed. "It strikes me, Hiram, you are a bit unreasonable. Don't you know that there must be certain people to make money and certain others to spend it? Why, that's the very foundation of an aristocracy; it's what we're trying to build up. Seems to me you're not very patriotic."

"No, I'm not," he retorted abruptly; "another year of it and I shall go west, where there's more business and less of this confounded soci——" And they vanished within.

Kenneth meanwhile had snapped the hitching-chain into the bridle, and was on the point of following when a little girl with flushed cheeks and flaxen curls came running round the corner of the house.

"Kennet'! O Kennet'!" she cried, seizing him in an informal hug. "I'se so glad you've come."

He laughed, looking down in her eyes. "My mamma," she added ingenuously, "always kisses little boys when they come here."

He shook his head quickly, in sudden bashfulness. That sort of thing might do very well for little boys. "But she never kisses a *man*, Enid," he protested positively.

"Oh, yes, she does, sometimes," she insisted as they moved away over the lawn towards the lake. "Wait! you must come this way, Kennet'."

"Don't you want to see the boats sail?" he asked longingly.

"No, not now," she declared, "I've got a tea-party all ready."

The boy stopped short in awful dismay. "Tea party, Enid!" he cried. "Oh, dear! I don't like tea-parties."

She pouted. "But you might like it just to please me, you know." She seemed to have heard the words before, to speak instinctively.

"But who's there?" he maintained, dubious, still hanging back.

"Pshaw!" she cried, getting ruffled. "'Tisn't anybody 'vited 'cept you and me, and Maud—she's my big dolly. Now, will you come, Mr. Kennit'?"

Her eyes flashed indignantly; and, seeing that his

fears were more formidable than warranted by the actual numbers present, he humbly begged her forgiveness. Hand in hand they hastened to the spot beneath the elms where the tiny table was spread, and where Maud patiently awaited the coming of the hostess and guest of honor, seated there prettily like any of a hundred well-bred young ladies and tea-party habitués, any one of whom might well have envied her manner and the blasé society smile on her elegant features which was warranted to be one of the very latest and most fashionable things in smiles.

Afterwards they went down to the lake, which at this hour was as quiet as a mill-pond, with scarcely breeze enough to stir its surface, and, finding that the water was warm, the children removed their shoes and stockings and waded out for some distance from the shore. Then for a space they amused themselves loading Enid's ship with sand and shells and pretending that it was going to Africa. But to Kenneth's disappointment, instead of sailing far out over the lake and beyond the horizon, the ship always returned. It destroyed the illusion; though, as Enid had reminded him, she guessed it was her very own ship and she didn't want it to sail away off there and never come back any more.

"But you mustn't want it to come back, Enid," he argued. "You ought to pray for it to go away off there where the missionaries are and carry sand to the heathen."

"Who are they, Kennet'—the 'ishionaries?"

"What! the missionaries? Doesn't your mamma tell you about them, Enid?"

"No," and she shook her head sadly; "my mamma always has such a bad headache."

Accordingly he proceeded to tell her all about—about—well, about religion, and how badly we

should all of us feel about "the poor heathen who have no clothes to wear"—Enid's eyes twinkled—"and no Bibles, and no Sunday-school books, and don't know how to say their prayers——"

"Oh, goody!" cried Enid, clapping her hands.

"And no tea-parties, either," he added quickly.

"Oh," she sighed, and at once became serious again. She wondered how she and Maud could ever endure that.

But at last, when the sea gulls began circling shoreward and the black clouds rose suddenly out of the east, whilst the fishermen all drew in their lines and hastened ashore, and the breeze sprang up, growing fresher and stronger every moment as signs of the gathering storm increased, Enid became quite ready to let Kenneth have his will with her ship and dispatch it off for Africa in good earnest on the scudding wings of the storm. Aye, she even contributed one of the dear little tea-cups which belonged to her "set" and placed it carefully away in the hold of the vessel "for the 'ishionary."

And, trimming the sails critically, the lad held it a moment, perhaps stirred with the same poetic frenzy of a Magellan or Columbus ere putting a theory into experience, and then weighed anchor. Ah, what a sailer it was! "See, Enid! how it throws the spray from its bows, and what a splendid wake it leaves behind!" What power, what calmness, what majesty! A magnificent wake in sooth. It scarcely seemed possible that the lake itself would ever be able to blot *that* out and make it all one again with itself. The triumph of love, philanthropy, navigation even, could surely be proved in the progress of this magnificent ship on its way to Africa, carrying its load of precious sand and religion to the heathen. Already the hull of the vessel was becoming invisible, and presently only the white

topsails could be seen silhouetted against the blackening horizon. Then for a space the ship seemed to be encountering rough weather; the "Sturm und Drang" played havoc with its tiny sails, whilst two pairs of childish eyes strained anxiously till they could see it no more. Whereupon they placed their trust in Providence and two minutes afterwards the boat upset.

The following day, it may be confessed parenthetically, the Reverend Ebenezer Griggs, who was strolling along the shore with his little son by the hand, picked up a beautiful boat all shorn of its masts and sails, and, holding it towards his son, he said: "See, my son, this is one of God's lessons. The fate of this frail craft warns us to avoid the unknown, which wicked, blasphemous men seek to traverse by what they foolishly term science. All good people should continue to walk calmly and contentedly along the shore, keeping their eyes fixed landward, forever and ever, amen."

But to Kenneth, standing there at her side and seeing the sails no longer, Enid said: "Is the ship in Af'ca now, Kennet'?"

And the waves, with their great white blossoms rolling shoreward and breaking at their feet, half drowned his answer, though the fresh young hope at his heart cried, "No, Enid; but it's on the way." Whilst the wind caught up his words and echoed them back in his ears. "It's on the way; on the way!" Over the darkened world, with the wings of light his fancy sped; whilst a lad's longing that knows not time, nor day, nor impediment, fetched the light to his eyes and the wildsome laugh to his lips as he stood with his head thrown back to the shrieking storm.

"But, Kennet', it's raining!" cried Enid, clutching

his hand. "Won't you p'ease pull up my stockin' and take me home?"

* * * * *

And, sitting there in the little café in Paris, Kenneth reread his father's letter for the fifth time, the while past and present swept over him and sent the blood surging wildly through his brain. "I fear, my son," he read, "that you will be called a 'theorist' upon returning to your home and taking up your work in the university. However, we shall not be alarmed when we remember that the world was built by a Theorist, and that it has been only because of a theorist here and another fortunate theorist there that the world has been kept moving along. When the giraffe first began stretching its neck in search of more food it was probably laughed at by its fellow animals who gained their living by grovelling in the dirt or consuming their fellows. 'Pooh! behold the theorist!' and the lion winked at the hippopotamus. Whereto the giraffe: 'Gentlemen, the proof of the pudding is in the eating,' and again he stretched his neck after a choice morsel that made the lion fairly pale with envy, whilst the hippopotamus oozed heavily out of sight with a despairing sigh."

"Poor father!" Kenneth smiled softly as the waiter reappeared and again offered him the great American newspaper. Accepting it this time, he noticed hastily that it was a copy of the *Chicago Republican*, whilst almost the first item that his eye fell upon stated that Mr. and Mrs. Potiphar Phillips had arrived at Paris.

"Phillips, Phillips? Ah!" And then, finally, it all came over him with a rush, in connection with the intelligence contained in this letter of his father's. Aye, 'twas the selfsame voice that had

appealed to him for a napoleon, crying out over the years from the storm: "Kennet', won't you p'ease pull up my stockin' and take me home?"

He drew forth the card given him the night before, studying it a moment thoughtfully, then lit a match. "Potiphar's card," he mused, whilst the flame consumed it, a cynical smile playing round his mouth. "Oh, yes, and Mrs. Potiphar's."

CHAPTER III.

HINTS AND HELPS FROM MRS. MASON.

"I wonder if Kenneth returned last night, Edward. Have you seen Mabel to-day?"

"No, not since yesterday afternoon," replied the person addressed without looking up from his evening paper.

"Dear me! But don't you think we better go over and find out? It seems to me the boy will be lonesome, and somebody ought to go over and talk with him and try to cheer him up. Just think, Edward, it has been two years since he left home, and to come back and find his father dead, with the house all lonesome and deserted—oh, it must be awful! I'm sure he would feel better, and that I should, too, if I could only have the chance to talk with him a bit. That makes anyone feel better. Don't you think so, Edward?"

"Eh, what's that?" asked her husband, startled into confusion by her direct question and possibly too sudden pause. For Mrs. Mason's voice belonged to that species of uncatalogued afflictions which men have learned to endure through generations of suffering, and which, like a trolley-car or

similar annoyances, always startle one most when they stop too suddenly or begin again without adequate warning.

"Why, about Kenneth, Edward; I was saying——"

"Oh, yes, I heard you," said he, turning a page of his paper. "I saw Mabel yesterday and she said she had received a telegram from Kenneth and that she expected him that evening." Whereupon Mr. Mason again lost himself in the intricacies of the sugar-tariff scandal as reported from Washington.

"Dear me! then he's been home twenty-four hours and not one of his very own relatives has been to see him yet. I declare it's too bad, Edward, to treat anybody so, and we his only blood relations that he has on earth! Let's see, how many years has it been now since your sister died and Mabel went to live with the doctor? And that great lonely house, with the rooms all dark and the musical instruments all silent in the parlour, and those tall book-shelves in the library that fairly haunt anybody to look at with their yellow leather bindings and outlandish titles: 'Hope on the Heart,' 'King on the Kidney,' 'Lilly on the Liver.' Land sakes! I don't see how Mabel ever stood it to live there all alone with that old housekeeper after Dr. Moore's death, and those carpets that are that soft you can't hear your own footsteps speak to you when you walk. I never did believe in Mabel going there to live, anyhow; though, of course, Dr. Moore was her mother's brother, but then, you are her father's brother, you know, Edward, and it don't hardly seem right, seeing that she's your own flesh and blood. Now, do you think so, Edward?"

"Humph, a sweet mess, that!" Edward muttered, finishing the article on the sugar scandal and proceeding into the details of the man who had mur-

dered seven wives in a single year. "No, Helen, I don't suppose it was just the correct thing, you know," he ventured recklessly—in reply to her last question presumably. And again he plunged into his paper.

"Well, I declare, Edward, it does me good to have you agree with me for just once in awhile; it's so dreadful hard ever to get *you* to express an opinion on things that *I* think are so important and had just ought to be attended to. Now, that's just the way it was when your brother died and Mabel went to live with the doctor. You know I told you at the time what a careless man Dr. Moore was about collecting his money, and that he would just ruin the girl by being too kind and spending too much money on her for music and education and all that kind of thing that girls seem to think they just must have nowadays or else go broken-hearted. That's just the way he has done with Kenneth, you know. I declare, when I think of all the money that's been spent on that boy's education, and then to think of the pretty things that money would buy, it just seems downright wicked sometimes. And what on earth is he going to do with all that education anyway, that's what I want to know? Let's see, what is it you said he's going to teach in the university? Oh, yes, sociology. Humph! and isn't that one of those fads that the newspaper spoke about the other day, in an editorial, you know? Yes, I'm sure that was it; the editor said if some of our newspapers and colleges didn't stop preaching sociology that Englishmen wouldn't invest any more money in this country and that our republic was bound to fall all to pieces in consequence. But that's just like Dr. Moore to go and educate his son in this fashion. And what will Mabel do, I wonder? What do you think, Edward; what will become of her?"

"Dear me!" and he stroked his chin meditatively, "the prosecution alleges that he made soap of his last wife," answered Edward slowly.

"Goodness gracious me! whatever are you talking about, Edward?" and Mrs. Mason dropped her embroidery in alarm.

"Eh? Why, my dear, I thought it was you who was talking. I was thinking about this case. I beg your pardon, Helen, if I disturbed you." And, again adjusting his glasses, he resumed.

"But, Edward, wait! Don't you really think we ought to go there?"

"Go where, my dear?" he queried darkly.

"Why, over and see Kenneth, of course. You know how bad he must feel to come home and find his father dead and buried. I'm sure if it was *you* now, Edward, who had come home after being away two years only to find *me* dead and your house all empty, that you would feel like having somebody come in and talk to you. Why, it's only common decency and respect, Edward."

"Possibly, my dear," he admitted, but without being very clear in his mind. "Still, I hardly think it's worth while to disturb him to-night. To-morrow is Sunday, you know; won't that do, Helen?"

"Disturb him? Dear me, Edward! you never did know what it was to feel sympathy for anyone. You get so wrapped up in your law business that you seem to forget that folks have any feelings."

"But, my dear, isn't Mabel there with him?"

"Why, yes, of course she is; but, after all, Edward, do you think it's exactly proper for them two to be alone in that great, big house?"

Edward knitted his brows. "Please explain," he queried, "what the size of the house has to do with it?"

"Why!" she cried, taken aback for a moment;

"can you never be serious, Edward? You know what I mean."

Mr. Mason rustled his paper nervously. "Nonsense, Helen; they've lived there like brother and sister for the past fifteen years. Nobody has ever found any fault with the arrangement that I know of." And again the evening newspaper threatened to turn the conversation back into its legitimate stream of monologue.

"But listen, Edward, and do put down that horrid old paper for a second," she insisted. "Do you think Kenneth intends to marry her, now that he's returned?"

"Marry whom?"

"Why, Mabel, of course," she retorted.

"Nonsense," he returned shortly. "Kenneth is a man."

"Goodness me! And isn't Mabel a woman, I should like to know? I declare, Edward, I never saw any one in all my life who seemed to appreciate so little his own brother's child. Anybody would suppose that you considered she wasn't good enough for Kenneth, and I just say it's a shame for her own father's brother to treat her so. And she plays the piano beautifully. You know yourself, Edward, that she has the most extraordinary talent for music; never in all my life did I ever see any one who could make her fingers fly so fast over the keyboard as Mabel. The poor girl! you know she has no father and mother, and that we are the only true blood relations she has on earth. I tell you she's every whit good enough for Master Kenneth; and I've just told her so, too."

"No, you haven't, though?" he asked quickly. "Now, look here, Helen, you know I love Mabel the same as you do, but I do hope you haven't been putting any silly notions into the child's head."

"Silly notions, Edward?"

"Well, about her marrying Kenneth, for instance. Why, I tell you it would be the greatest misfortune that could happen to either of them."

"I don't see why," she argued; "especially since the doctor saw fit to divide his property equally between them both. You know very well that if they keep the property together it will be better than for them to divide and squander it."

"Pshaw! Confound the property! It's their marrying that I object to. The property is too small to cut any figure in a case like this."

"Oh, yes, I know, Edward; that's just your way. You never would try to save and economize."

"No, and what's more, I never shall," he declared bluntly. "I have no patience or sympathy with those who seek to make a virtue of the worst passion of the human race, namely, saving and selfishness."

"And that's just the reason we've never got on any better, Edward, it——"

"Got on? Who in thunder wants to get on, Helen? Haven't we got a good home and enough to be comfortable?"

"Why, yes, of course, Edward, you know I'm not complaining. Dear me, no! I think everybody ought to be contented with his lot and not be helping these demagogues and democrats and anarchists stirring up the people into a riot and keeping Englishmen from investing their money here. And if the rich are getting richer and the poor poorer I guess it's nobody's business but their own. Anyway, the Bible says 'the poor ye have always with you,' but, of course, we haven't as much money as the people next door, Edward, and there's no use pretending that we have. Only it must be very pleasant to be president of some charity club and to have

your picture in the newspaper for everybody to see and know that you take an interest in the poor. And that reminds me, Edward," nearly drowning afresh in a new flood of ideas, "that I forgot to speak to you about the poor family just round the corner next to the alley. They are awfully poor; the wife has been sick in bed for three years and her husband lost his job during a strike, and the oldest son, who is a bricklayer, fell off a scaffold the other day and broke his leg. The father came to our back door yesterday begging for provisions, and I gave him that cold roast that was left over last Sunday. You know, Edward, we should never have touched it again anyway. I never could bear to eat meat after it got too old, though, of course, he was very grateful for it and thanked me with tears in his eyes. Poor dear old man! Hark, was that the bell? I just believe it's a message from Mabel."

And Mrs. Mason arose and passed out of the room, leaving the air weary and perplexed behind her.

Meanwhile a scene of fewer words was progressing between the two principals of that lady's conversation, for Kenneth had arrived home the night before and had been busy all day assisting his father's solicitor in straightening out the tangled affairs of his estate. This evening, seated at his father's desk, with Mabel leaning on the arm of his chair, he was running over hastily and making mental memoranda of the papers that had been accumulating and pigeonholed during a space that covered nearly his entire lifetime.

"Here's a package that will interest you, Kenneth, perhaps," said Mabel softly. "Do you know, for the past year he had taken great delight in everything that concerned your own work. No matter how slight or trivial, whenever he came across anything

that he thought would interest you he made me copy and index it."

"Dear father—and poor Mabel!" he murmured, smiling and placing the package carefully away. "By the way, has Dr. Little called lately?"

"Oh, yes; he was here only a few days ago to inquire when you were expected home. He remained a few moments and talked with me; said he knew you would be pleased to see how the university has grown during the past two years, building after building, granite and oak and marble."

Kenneth frowned. He had, in fact, heard enough when abroad of Dr. Little's success as a promoter, from which he began to fear results the reverse of beneficent. Not merely in the Rockland University, either, but on every hand, wherever colleges needed money—and what ones did not?—he observed the same subtle and corrupting influences at work; so that, latterly, college presidents had come to be chosen less for their scholarship and more for their ability to wring money from the inordinately swollen purse of some millionaire. Hence, after many centuries, it seemed, the democratic idea had progressed so far that men who could amply afford the luxury no longer sought to purchase immortality for their technically damned souls by giving largesses to St. Peter's advance agents; but, on the contrary, after long years spent in every conceivable chicanery, they now found themselves desirous to purchase that at which all their lives they had mocked and reviled and ground under the heel—namely, the esteem of their fellow-men. So that they must needs found libraries and universities, albeit only to be roundly condemned if they did so, and again if they refused, such being one of the many paradoxical proofs to Kenneth's mind of a society false in its every economic foundation.

"I suppose you told him, Mabel, that I should be ready to take up my work Monday?" he asked.

She nodded. "Do you see what I've been doing?" She pointed to the doctor's ledger. "I've posted all those accounts for you."

He smiled, half sadly. "I'm sorry, Mabel; I fear you've had all your work for nothing."

"Oh, no, surely not," she persisted. "Why, Kenneth, there are over fifteen thousand dollars in accounts!" And, her mind full of the picture of the good old doctor out in unseasonable weather and hours that kill, she was half inclined to be angry with what she deemed Kenneth's indifference. "You will need it so much, you know."

For answer his arm stole round her, and he kissed her affectionately, with reassurance. Good friends and playmates, such, in fact, was all they had ever been. They had loved and quarrelled and made up again ever since childhood; but, despite his being the elder, it was generally her will that controlled, though he knew it not. His was, besides, a compassionate nature, and something in Mabel's sudden helplessness seemed to call on him now for protection, and something in her own manner may have compelled it from him without any distinct consciousness of the fact on her part. Moreover, occupied as he had been in latter years, his fancy had never found time to lie dreaming and spinning the adorable angel, gown of azure and all, who in the golden some day was to set the authentic spark to his soul. Study and travel, it is true, had done much to shape the aberrant aims of his youth, and to set them in a fixed and noble direction; but as for those adventitious claims that society immediately imposes, he was as thoughtless as a child, and as helpless.

As for Mabel, some whispering ghost of the

garrulous Mrs. Mason may have reminded her that Kenneth was hers by right of inheritance, and that, anyway, it was all part of the doctor's design in leaving his property to them jointly. Moreover, she had always admired and respected him, in a way; he was always so obliging and considerate in waiting upon her, which spoke volumes in his favour. Not but that there were dozens of other young men who would have been proud to do the same, for Mabel was attractive, and the doctor had been as generous with her as with his son in all that implied education. But, despite her somewhat superficial nature, she was ambitious withal, and there is that, perhaps, in the return of a young man from a foreign university quite as potent to enthrall the heart of a girl as brass buttons and a uniform. How manly he had grown! She had never blushed before in a way that caused her cheeks to burn when he had chosen to kiss her, or, rather, when she had permitted him. True, there were other worshippers, taller and whom she thought finer looking; and who—no, whose fathers had dollars for every penny that Kenneth possessed. But no one else had his ways, his impulses, his magnificent prospects; compared to him at this moment all other young men were but the merest dawdlers, indifferent drones.

She yielded; she had never known it was really like that to be loved. It surprised her. And the following morning she smiled at herself in the glass, prettily, unaffectedly, with satisfaction.

"How he has changed in his absence!" she said to herself.

CHAPTER IV.

THE OLD AND THE NEW.

The first six months that followed on Kenneth's return had passed rapidly, and by this he was well on with his work in the Rockland university. An eventless period, perhaps, to such of his fellow teachers as continued to indoctrinate the ideas of their grandfathers, in joyless iteration, into the heads of the listless and yawning young gentlemen in their class-rooms. But to him, and to most of his students whom he had succeeded in arousing into an enthusiastic and vital belief in his subject, the time had been one of splendid presage, luminous with truth, thunderous of Olympian prophecy. Moreover, his relations with the men in the other departments were most cordial and friendly; he appealed to them constantly, scarcely a day passing in which he was not reminded that the very roots and elements of his specialty were broadly contained in those various scattered snatches of truth which men have collected from chaos and named science.

So far, however, aside from illustrations afforded by the surrounding industrial life, there had been little to give a strong human impulse to his work; although by the mere energy of his heartbeats, his eternal sympathies, he had been able to lift up from the foul muck of its degradation his beloved science, that under his hands was no longer to be termed "the dismal." For he had gone back to Nature, resting the entire structure of his special profession on this single query: Given a Republic, a fertile country, a thrifty and intelligent population, how shall we provide subsistence for the whole people? This was

the substance of his political economy, rather than vainly seeking to tell a few people how to get rich and the masses how to be patient under monopoly and oppression.

But one morning whilst he sat at work in his study, there came a knock on his door, and, in reply to his absent "Come in!" Mabel's voice asked:

"Are you very busy, Kenneth? You have a caller." She laid a card on his desk, face upward.

"Ah, the Reverend Ebenezer Griggs," he read wonderingly. "Who in the world is he, Mabel? The name sounds familiar somehow, but I can't place him."

She explained. Dr. Griggs was a newcomer, she believed, but he was at present pastor of the Rockland Baptist Church. "I suppose he is seeking converts," she added, smiling ruefully. "Dear me! you were never even baptized. What shall I do?"

He frowned and bit his penholder. Hitherto he had enjoyed a peaceful immunity from calls of this kind, but now, on account of his work, his position, his influence—well, he had apprehended the fact that he might any day be called upon to declare his principles and subscribe to some disagreeable constitution.

"Please keep him in the parlour, Mabel," he said hurriedly. "I'll be in in just a moment. Thank you."

Howbeit the Reverend Ebenezer Griggs was no more ominous nor to be avoided than others of his kind. He was rather a tall, full-blooded, thick-set individual with reddish whiskers, who ordered his life and work in accordance with certain well-defined rules and conventions of the human race, and though he was a person of infinitely more respect for faith and dead traditions than for such questions as are commonly called "live," he doubtless tried to

live honestly in extent to the truth that was in him, insomuch that he seldom spoke harshly of his neighbours when outside of his pulpit, even though he could not always refrain from congratulating himself and his hearers that God had been good to him in permitting him to be born a Baptist instead of a Methodist or a Roman Catholic. This, however, was only one of his little idiosyncracies that his parishioners found easy to forgive in a man of so much positive virtue and vigour of expression—if, in truth, they ever noticed this trifling and not unlovable little conceit.

He always spoke, moreover, in a deep voice wherein a certain gruff heartiness and assurance were not unpleasant; indeed, to many, this very compelling note of his may have constituted his chief charm: force, even whilst travelling in a wrong direction, being naturally more attractive than a resistance so weak as to appear contemptible. Mr. Griggs had also done some slum work.

"I have called, Professor Moore," he explained, after his usual preliminary pleasantries, "first, to see whether you do not desire to come into the church with us; and, secondly, whether you do or not, if you won't kindly consent to give us three or four Sunday evening lectures on subjects connected with your work?"

Kenneth signed to Mabel to remain, and, avoiding the first, he grasped vaguely at the second and more pleasing proposition.

"I thank you, Dr. Griggs. It would, of course, be a privilege to extend my work in such a manner," he replied tentatively.

"Good! I knew you would feel that way." Drawing his chair closer to the professor's and taking a slip of paper from his pocket, he continued: "Now, I've outlined here, very generally, a series that I

have entitled 'The Necessity for Inspiration in the Humbler Walks of Life.' I believe you grasp my meaning, of course—namely, that the lowest toiler in the field, the mine, the factory, should feel and *must* feel the same inspiration in his work that is felt by his employer or manager. It is a wonderfully fruitful subject, professor, one on which I have long meditated. It has fortunately occurred to me, however, that you are better prepared to treat it than I am."

Kenneth bowed. The presumption and cheek of the man took his breath away. Their point of view was obviously so utterly at variance.

"You doubtless catch the significance, professor," Dr. Griggs went on, gracefully. "Such a series of lectures, I believe, would do much to make thinking people satisfied and restore the labourer's old-time content with his lot; this, too, in the face of all this godless and unprofitable labour agitation that confronts us on every hand; and——"

"But," Kenneth answered, unable to mask his feelings any longer, "it isn't true, Dr. Griggs. I beg your pardon a thousand times, but you are wholly mistaken!"

Dr. Griggs was profoundly surprised. He was not apt to be mistaken, least of all to be told so.

"You mean about this labour agitation?" he asked.

No, Kenneth protested, there was no end of that, of course; but about "inspiration in the humbler walks of life." Why, the very idea was an insult to the mind of an intelligent being. "You have failed to allow for the fact, Dr. Griggs, that the condition of the labouring man in this country is no longer as it was twenty years ago. Opportunities to work for himself have passed; he is now little better than a slave, hence can properly feel little

inspiration in contemplating his condition, and it would be no less than mockery to tell him to feel inspired whilst receiving in general less than half what he rightfully earns."

"But, my dear sir, don't you believe in Christianity?"

"Pardon me, Dr. Griggs, but that is beside the question," the professor parried courteously. "If you mean to ask whether I think a belief in Christianity will correct our many economic injustices, I answer No! most emphatically No! For seventeen hundred years organised Christianity has been on the side of the oppressor and against the oppressed."

The minister made a move as if to rise; clearing his voice, he said: "I certainly did not know you felt—well, like this, professor, else I should not have asked you. True, I grant that there are many deplorable conditions that—er—seem impossible to surmount, but this is only another reason why the divine truths of the Bible should be taught more generally. You remember, of course, what Christ said about the poor being always with us; and, whilst I do not admit that it is a condition of slavery, even if it is, would it not be better to teach contentment than to incite men to violence and open rebellion?"

Dr. Griggs stood upright, having clinched his argument to his fullest satisfaction. And, chagrined at having committed himself in this manner and to no purpose, Kenneth saw at once that he must in some way convince this opponent or else stand in danger of his inconvenient displeasure on every future occasion. And so, declaring frankly that he regretted this idle difference of opinion, he added:

"As for the lectures, Dr. Griggs, if you will agree to give me three hours of your time any afternoon

this week, I shall be only too ready to speak afterwards on whatever Sunday evening you may name."

Again the clergyman was surprised, somewhat disagreeably; he certainly had not called for this! Common courtesy, however, compelled his assent. But as the days passed by without his even calling to fulfill his agreement, the professor, not to be thwarted after going thus far, finally wrote him a letter reminding him of his promise. Whereunto there came an answer that Dr. Griggs had been so occupied with the routine work of his parish for some time that he had really found no time to avail himself of Professor Moore's kindly offer. "On the fifteenth, however (Thursday, P. M.), I hope to be at leisure and shall be pleased to call on you at your home."

Kenneth smiled as he read it. "I mean to show this man, Mabel, though I may never teach any one else, that there are conditions in this world, wicked and unjust conditions, that the Christian church never has bettered and never can; and that any church so full of pessimism and stock arguments for the perpetuation of poverty, is a church that is dead, and justly hated."

Mabel shook her head, rippling an arpeggio from the piano, where she sat.

"Oh dear! You know, Kenneth, nearly all the university people attend his church. It will only make trouble."

"Yes, I know, but, you see, there is trouble already. There's always trouble wherever you find ignorance and well-fed indifference seated in high places. Dr. Griggs, perhaps, means to be fair. Well, if he does I will give him a chance to see some of these economic problems so clearly that there will be no longer any excuse for his blindness. Then,

if he agrees with me, I have won a distinct promotion and advantage all along the line."

"Nonsense! If he agrees with you he will probably lose his church," she objected. "Dr. Griggs cannot afford to tell the wealthy people in his congregation of the evils you will show him. His congregation make their money out of those very evils. Well, do you think they will relish being told that they are found out, that most of their time-honoured institutions, as you say, are founded upon fraud?"

She played on, impetuously, and Kenneth walked the floor. In his heart he knew that Mabel was right. The social problem by this time had ceased to be so *profound* that people with half an eye could not see through it and understand fully that those whose pocketbooks were at stake would array themselves solidly against social reform at every point.

"I am beginning to wish, Kenneth," said Mabel, slowly and coming to a pause in her music, "that you had chosen some other subject than economics."

"Hm! You mean something that's dead? Latin, for instance."

"Yes, it's safer; people can't quarrel over it."

He stopped. "But you know, Mabel, I'm too fond of life for that. I believe in the laws of growth and development; indeed, they are the only laws I do believe in. That's one reason I love economics, not for itself, but as a means to an end—and such an end! when this paltry bread-and-butter existence shall become a thing of the past."

He resumed his walk up and down.

"Still, you might have chosen something else," she persisted. "There are other sciences that grow."

"Yes, but they don't promise freedom."

"Not even music?" she asked quickly. "Here;

have you seen this last concerto of Goltermann's?" She waved it to him from the piano.

She knew that would arrest him, and it did. Glancing it over hastily, but already half lost in its harmony: "Please play the prelude, Mabel."

Taking his cello, he tuned it softly as she played on. Here at least he could stand, with none to deny, on the shores of those limitless seas, reaching out vague, longing hands to the unknown. As Mabel perhaps felt, this after all was his life. But under what alien skies and foreign forces had it escaped him? How natural, how instinct with the artistic impulse of past generations was his every movement, as with a sweep of the bow he launched himself into the aberrant andante and glided gently onward into the shadowed stream that flowed beneath the willows and murmured amongst the moss-grown stones with the song of spring and the light-some joy of the allegretto. Pausing, tripping, running, but ever ascending towards the authentic source, the Infinite fountain-head; anon stealing along on tiptoe, until, with a prayer on the lips as he parted the way and shook the vagrant curls back from the flushing forehead, he stood at last alone, aloof, lost in the boundless abandonment of the noble adagio. O what olden son of Woden dwelt within that wondrous shell! How it breathed! how it breathed! and how it sobbed to the syncopation! The hovering hand that swayed and stilled, the angel tremolo, the heavenly harmonic ringing true, that was prayer and whispering answer to the passionate appeal; thence onward with precipitate clamour, culminating with sweeping chords and a last, blind, maddening flash.

Yet again he played the adagio, and again *pianissimo*. Silence followed.

"Didn't you like it, Kenneth?" she asked, with a smile.

He rose. "Oh, yes; it is beautiful. It means everything—and nothing."

He placed the cello back in the corner.

She flushed. "Not even as much as your old economics?"

"No," he replied, smiling the while, "not even as much as old economics. It is all too indeterminate, mysterious. I think, however, if this eternal bread-and-butter problem could only be settled, as it has never been for five thousand years despite its simplicity, that then I might care to fiddle a little, that then humanity might take on loftier flights both in music and in literature." He waited an instant, adding, "Till then I scarcely care very much either for one or the other. It seems too heartless; affords no real freedom."

"O Kenneth! but it would, it would—freedom of a truer sort. Your aspiration is absurd. Listen! is there no freedom in this?" She broke off into Grieg's spring song, playing with infinite grace and expression.

"Yes, very pretty, very pretty," he conceded, pausing the while. "Individual freedom, of a sort—'tis a fool's paradise."

She turned round, with a laugh that was half vexation, hands idle in her lap. "You mean, I suppose, that life will never be noble so long as people must work for a living? But when do you expect the millennium, please? And are you willing to wait?"

He frowned. "No, you know better than that, Mabel. You know I neither expect nor hope for the time when none will have to work, when cold roast turkey will be found roosting ready to hand in every tree. But what I do ask for is that machinery

and every other means may be brought to its rightful use in making this problem of a mere subsistence simpler and easier for the masses, instead of their lives being cursed and crushed out of them, as at present. Every intelligent person knows that it is nothing but the oppression by the rich, propped up by the church, that perpetuates poverty and makes life hideous. It is this, for one thing, that someone should try to show the Reverend Ebenezer Griggs, that there can be no Christianity, no true fraternity, so long as one half of the world is systematically employed in robbing the other half. It is the system that must be changed, not the people. I wish you wouldn't misunderstand me in this!"

CHAPTER V.

SAFEGUARDS OF LITERATURE.

But already the domestic economy of their home was becoming a thing to cause Mabel no little uneasiness. At first she had trusted that the income from some of Dr. Moore's old accounts might help them, at least till Kenneth should receive an increase in his salary. Alas! she had forgotten the fact that few people can bring themselves to the point of paying their doctor whilst he lives, and none at all after he is dead. Consequently she collected scarcely a penny of the thousands of dollars due, and, though the doctor had left a small life insurance, there was also a mortgage on his house sufficient to absorb that completely. It fretted her, preyed upon her continually, till one day she resolved to speak of it, to have it over. She found occasion to broach the subject to her husband one

morning ere his hour came for quitting the house. "Don't you think, Kenneth, we'd better apply this insurance money on the mortgage?" she said, apology for the interruption softly audible in her tones.

He glanced up from his book. "What's that? Oh, no, there will be something more coming in presently."

"Indeed I don't see how, unless you are promised more salary."

"Yes, of course; after a time, Mabel, that will come all right. Let me see. By Jove! I'm glad you reminded me of it. Here's my book, you know; I had nearly forgotten it," and he picked up a package of manuscript. "This ought to bring us a thousand dollars at least."

Mabel smiled incredulously. "You mean that manuscript the publishers sent back to you from New York?"

"Yes; but that cuts no figure, Mabel. You could scarcely expect a New York publisher to see anything good in this sort of a book. I shall let some Chicago firm publish it. It's strange," he added, rising hurriedly, "how it has slipped my mind since it came back. I shall take it downtown with me now."

She shook her head. "I hate to say anything, dear, but——"

"But what?" he asked as she paused. "Don't you like the book, Mabel?"

"Y-yes, I like it—because you wrote it. But, some way, it doesn't seem as though—well, that any one else would like it. Why don't you write a story, Kenneth—just a simple little story?"

"Humph! nonsense! What business have I or anyone else to write 'just a simple little story' in times when the whole world is starving! No, I tell you, it is unspeakably heartless, even immoral,

to write or read mere love-stories when so many are suffering for the bare necessities of life. Can any one think to-day that life is such a simple senseless skit wherein love is of more importance than light, or air, or food, or sunshine? And yet, just read two centuries' yield of fiction—or ask any servant girl! Their unanimity will be amazing. No, I shall publish something that will do the world some good—or I shall publish nothing.” He drew on his overcoat and caught up his hat and manuscript, with the customary “Good-by” and the assurance in his every manner that some publisher would surely want it before night.

Fortunately, perhaps, he had friends who had lately embarked in the publishing business and who might possibly facilitate his quest; true, they had so far published nothing but fiction, but this was no reason why they might not invest in a more solid form of literature if something of worth were submitted. So to this firm, known favourably as the O. G. Goldsmith-Smith Publishing Company, he went first and stated his business.

The proprietor, Mr. O. G. Goldsmith-Smith himself, was not in; but Mr. Samuel Kent was, and moreover, the opinion prevailed that this young gentleman was the actual pilot of the firm's doubtful fortunes.

“You said it was on economics and not fiction, Dr. Moore, I believe?” said the publisher.

Kenneth nodded. Mr. Kent really did not appear elated at the chance.

“Of course,” he explained, “we are in the publishing business to make money and would be glad to invest in any book in which we can see a profit. But I regret to say, Dr. Moore, that the reading public does not seem to care for economics, though personally it is a subject in which I am profoundly

interested. However, such is the barren, pitiable fact; the public is seeking amusement, not instruction, even though the latter were to save it from destruction."

"I am sorry," Kenneth stammered slowly, "but of course I thank you for your perfect frankness. Still, such books are published now and then. You might, perhaps, tell me what houses to call on. Would it be too much trouble to give me a few addresses?"

"Oh, no, it's no trouble at all, I assure you," said Kent. "But, honestly, I don't know. A book on economics is about the last thing that any publisher cares to accept." He halted a moment, then added: "You might call on McBugle & Dunn. I used to be with them, and occasionally we would get out such a book. Still, knowing the character of your work in the university, Dr. Moore, I feel safe in saying that the books on economics published by McBugle & Dunn are certainly not such as are in accord with your sentiments."

Kenneth glanced at him quickly. "I suppose not. Very few of such books are," he sighed. "Unfortunately, Mr. Kent, the average work on economics is of such stuff best calculated to appease that portion of the community which still believes in a protective tariff and the immaculate conception."

Kent laughed. "That is too true; plenty of money for the few and an abundance of faith for the masses. That's what you imply—is it not? However, if you will leave your manuscript with me I shall be glad to see if I cannot interest some one in it. Mr. Goldsmith-Smith may think differently." And as Kenneth thanked him and rose to leave, he asked: "How is Mabel?"

The professor thanked him courteously, replying that she was well, and invited him to call. "And

bring Smith along with you," he urged. "He has never called since our marriage."

Kent apologized. "O. G. Goldsmith-Smith," said he, "is keeping his nose to the grindstone nowadays writing love-stories. Yes, I shall be delighted to persuade him to take an evening off some time. Good-by. I shall do all I can for your manuscript, I assure you."

When Mr. Goldsmith-Smith entered the office a half hour later Kent passed the manuscript over to him, watching him skip through it the while. In his twenty-fifth year, Oliver G. Goldsmith-Smith was one of those rare youths, favoured of the immortals, who are frequently referred to as "rising." With a happy turn for the conventional, a flowing and easy style, and a taste for society, he addicted himself to the writing of love-stories. When his uncle died he inherited a snug little fortune, the only condition being that he should adopt his uncle's name in connection with his own. A matter of easy accomplishment, obviously; but no, such proved not the case, for his uncle's name being itself Goldsmith-Smith, it refused for many a puzzling day to be satisfactorily incorporated with his own. At first thought the young man had intended merely to doff his Oliver and go under the plain democratic cognomen of Goldsmith Smith, but on so informing his uncle's attorney that worthy had objected.

"No, Mr. Smith, that will not fulfil the specifications outlined, defined and designated in this will. You must couple your uncle's name with your own!"

"The devil!" he cried in dismay. "Do you mean to say I must call myself Oliver Goldsmith-Smith-Goldsmith-Smith?"

The lawyer's head wagged, sapiently. "It is so nominated in the bond," said he. "Still, I think we

might effect a compromise on one surname, perhaps."

"Thanks!" and Smith slid out. He was a little fellow, fat and chubby, and the weight of all that name seemed to fall upon his head like a mountain. When he stepped into the elevator on the eighteenth floor the machine seemed scarcely more than a parachute to him in his descent to terra firma. Even then he felt dizzy and sick at the stomach; he went home and to bed all that day, and all through the long dark hours of the night he sat bolt upright between the sheets, shaking his fist and swearing at the incubus that hovered round him. Oh, it would drive him into a madhouse in six months!

However, the money helped to tide him over; his convalescence was rapid; and instead of going insane there was scarcely a magazine of any worth and circulation in the whole country that had not made demands upon him for stories signed by that golden-linked, hyphenated and hybrid name. He was the fad for a time; the fluency of his pen was nothing in comparison with that of his name; which is in no wise remarkable in this Golden Age of literature wherein more famous names, perhaps, than Goldsmith-Smith's have written poorer tales at a shilling the word. Not only this, but he had lately become his own publisher, and with his own magazine wherein to advertise and properly review his stories.

"Sam," said he to Kent, glancing up from the manuscript finally, "do you mean to say you've accepted this?"

Kent shook his head without looking up. "No, Oliver, not yet," he replied.

"Um! I'm glad of that. I don't like it."

"Read it through, Oliver. It may do you good."

Hearing Kent speak, one might have marked him

as a person who weighed his words carefully and with a nice regard to their application. It was habit, perhaps; for he was a man half through life who until quite recently had been diverted with little of its lighter and brighter side. Having said good-by to his country home at the age of fourteen, he had fought for over twenty years, boy and man, his own way in the mercantile life of the city, beginning as an errand boy in one of the large publishing houses, afterwards a wrapper and packer, and, finally, a book salesman on the floor of the retail department. In this manner six years slipped by without his realising any particular lack in his education; but at this point he saw that he could go no further unless—well, he would speak to the manager about it.

"How old were you when you left school, Sam?" asked that worthy, carelessly, deigning not to look up from his desk.

"Nearly fourteen, sir," he had answered, truthfully.

"Humph! Well, you better stay on the floor. That's the best place for you, Sam. Accustom yourself to the stock so you can find any book with your eyes shut. That's all. Yes; that's the best plan, Sam, I assure you."

But as the boy moved away, clumsily, the manager had said to himself: "Poor fellow! it's a pity; he's so honest and faithful. But he is ignorant—hopelessly ignorant! And what is a boy of that age to do who has no education and is forced to work from early to late for his living?"

But Sam had answered the question *in toto*: for the following eight years, at a period when a young man is generally supposed to be enjoying himself, Sam Kent was striving sedulously to get some learning into that hopelessly ignorant mind of his.

A sorry task at first, especially when half his wages must be sent home every week to help pay expenses and keep up the interest on a mortgaged farm whose land was alleged to be playing out or whose crops were ceasing to be of any value. But he did it; he lived on little or nothing, yet managed to keep himself neatly dressed all the time; whilst the capital that he had saved up was truly enormous. Aye, Nature has her compensations for those who care to pay the price, he would sometimes bethink himself, with a smile; all capital need not be necessarily derived by the sweating of the many for the sole interest of a few idle spendthrifts, and, though Sam's capital was all in his head, it is possible that if more of this same kind were being stored up the other base and yellow would soon cease to be either a power or a torment in the world at large. A few hundred books which represented but a fraction of the number studied; classical and modern dictionaries, grammars, histories, general literature, and, lastly, complete and beautiful sets of Ruskin, Carlyle and Emerson, Darwin and Rousseau,—these might have stood for capital in the eyes of the second-hand man round the corner, or of Sam's landlady had she at any time become afraid lest Sam should default on his board. But she wasn't—he had been with her too long.

Ten years from the time Sam had been advised to “stay on the floor,” the manager called him to his desk to have a little conversation with him. He had noticed that Sam was buying a great many books; he had become curious over the matter to the extent of detailing a clerk to check over Sam's account and give him an inventory of the stock that had been charged and paid for by him. The result was surprising. He wondered what that young fellow was doing with all those books. Was he

starting another book-store somewhere to rival their own? He would call Sam up and find out.

He found out. From a five minutes' chat it went on to a quarter of an hour, a half, a full hour, and again another. When Sam finally left him with a smile and a clasp of the hand, the manager gave himself a good pinch on the arm, and then on the thigh. "Good Lord, am I dreaming?" he asked aloud. "Why, that fellow knows more than I do, and I am a graduate of Yale College!"

Ah, it was all very impudent of Sam; nay, impious! "Shall a college education not suffice a man for his lifetime? My diploma is still framed and hanging!"

The following day Sam took his place on the editorial staff in the publishing department.

But if Nature gives fair compensation she also sends just retribution; every obverse has its reverse; every systole its diastole; every sweet its bitter. Ten years, ten years! of how little significance they seemed when chatting to the manager for an idle two hours! That first half-dozen books on language and mathematics, how painful were the first two years in which he was striving to master them! How dumb and thick-headed he had been; why, he had had to call in his landlady's fifteen-year-old boy to assist him! Not till the end of five years did his gray-matter begin to acquire form and perfection, the nervous elements to build their railroads and ramifications so that when an idea should strike him from any source it would have a proper conveyance to travel by and suitable accommodations at the end of the route. And the temptations—what a tug it had taken at the time to resist them! Senseless follies for the greater part, perhaps; yet to a young man of red blood, and health, and action, tired of the daily routine and the never ending drill at night

it had been none too easy at first when beset on every hand by his companions. Quiet, modest, unassuming, he was a favourite despite himself until the last one had deserted and given him up in despair. "Come along, Sam; there's going to be a mill at the Athletic to-night." "Thanks, I have a mill of my own to grind." "Come on, old man, we are going to paint the town to-night." But again he refused; he had a little painting of his own to do, a little interior work with John Ruskin. Until all his old acquaintances finally dropped him, saying that he was an ass, and an idiot, that he had thrown away his youth, and was as dried up as a piece of old leather.

And very likely he was; we shall have no argument over him. Especially as no one but God is ever alleged to have said on beholding the semi-completion of a man: "He is very good!" Which implies that the Deity must have been easy to satisfy, or else that it requires wisdom little short of omniscience in this evolutionary age to say so much of any man, of any puppet, and of poor old Adam least of all.

Several years more passed, and Sam was becoming known as a critic. Personally, his few acquaintances loved him; but the mass of people in general hated him heartily for what he had to say about books, and people, and things. They declared that he was a cynic, and moreover that he knew nothing at all of that life which he arrogantly presumed to criticise. The final retort reached his heart. In fencing with a truthful man, there is no instrument so potent to disarm him as that of his own. Liars in general know this, and are quick to take novel advantage of it in ridding themselves, by means of a truthful prick, of an honest antagonist who were

otherwise invulnerable. Then they go on lying again.

"Mrs. Brady," said Sam, one day, to his landlady. "I'm going to live at the Oxford Club."

Mrs. Brady dropped her pancake knife. "Lord save us, Mr. Sam! Whatever shall I do?" She did so enjoy browning those cakes for "Mr. Sam."

"Oh, that'll be all right, Mrs. Brady," he assured her; "I shall keep my room here just as it is, books and everything; and sometimes I shall come over and see th— and see you," and he swallowed his mouthful. "That was a very fine cake, Mrs. Brady."

She glowed gratefully. "Mr. Sam" was always so good to her; he had eaten seven that morning. And to think that *it* must be the last!

But that was two years ago. Sam was now a member of the Oxford in good standing, keeping his dues paid and his shoes polished, and trying to make himself fit into his dress suit whilst familiarizing himself with the details of that profound subject of which he was so hopelessly ignorant, to wit, polite society. And it must be confessed—with weakness, with mortification—that the first night he had gone out with fear and trembling, and returned in confusion; and the next time, and the next,—and the next. Yes, he knew he was foolish and unreasonable, but how under the heavens was he, Sam Kent, ever to become so easy, so graceful, so gracious and natural as those charming folk in Chicago, who from their youth up had worn diamonds and said "haven't saw?" Why, it was a world of its own, with habits and instincts of its own, it must be studied *sui generis*; yet how had he dared to touch it, to come into it, with rude hands, with barbarian feet, and with impious lips! Oh, it was shameful, profane—society ought to have murdered him!

But that was only the first season. During the second, doubt entered his brain; by the third he was a skeptic confirmed, and at the age of thirty-seven—but looking ten years younger; dark hair, melancholic eyes, mesmeric moustache—he was one of those most provoking of beaux, a cynic who laughed in a quiet, refined, and wholly dispassionate way, ruthlessly smashing your Parian gods and directly building you one out of plaster to take its place, whilst alleging all the time that it was the most beautiful until you agreed with him in spite of yourself—“only it all seemed so strange!” simpered Miss Susan. Yet a negative pole withal, but one that surely did not repel; who danced—some said indifferently, others well; but who at all times chatted delightfully in a pensive, half-amused, world-weary way that was declared to be perfectly charming by mamma and maiden and miss, but who was himself strangely and blissfully unconscious of it all.

At the Oxford Sam had won the acquaintance and esteem of Mr. O. G. Goldsmith-Smith. The latter had learned within a few days after Sam's entrance into their midst that Sam was a critic; it therefore behooved him to make his acquaintance, for as likely as not Sam would be criticising one of his books some day. Of course he expected criticism, wanted it, in fact, but then, the critic might as well be decent about it. “I don't pretend to be Shakspeare, you know.” Hence he had taken Sam under his wing, had introduced him, taught him how to bowl and play pool, and those thousand-and-one little trifles about a necktie, a dress suit, and society, which everyone may be supposed to know, but which, after all, are a long way from being intuitive and were not as plain as Greek to Sam Kent. And the latter had appreciated these offices to the full;

Mr. O. G. Goldsmith-Smith had saved him from being a boor, had made a gentleman of him, had come as Pharaoh's daughter, and plucked him, a thumb-sucking Moses, out of the miasmatic bulrushes and prepared a place for him in the king's house.

Naturally he was grateful; it was one of those debts that he felt he could never repay. He managed to stammer his sense of appreciation, awkwardly, towards the close of the first season.

"Oh, don't mention it, my dear fellow," Mr. Goldsmith-Smith had responded, airily. "Of course, I've spent a little time on you, a few spare moments that I might otherwise have put in my manuscript,—but by Jove! I'll tell you what you can do for me, if you want to?"

"Name it."

"I'll read you my latest story; let you criticise it."

It was kind; it was ingenuous; and Sam agreed gladly on one condition, which was that he must read the story to himself, and alone. In no other way could he do it justice. "Leave a wide margin, my boy," he suggested pleasantly.

"Oh, yes; I always do that, you know, Sam. It looks better. By Jove! I pity those poor devils who can't afford to use paper freely and bunch their words from one edge until they turn a corner on the next. A beautiful strip of white margin is what I love."

But when his manuscript had come back from Sam, with that erstwhile beautiful white margin, that sandy desert, all filled with strange and incomprehensible words and turns and quirks, with what looked to be a new town-site actually laid off in the northwest corner of the fifteenth page, and various trunk lines running to it from every point of the compass and more too, the entire area blossoming

with a rare and exotic growth in red, in blue, and in black,—ah, what in the devil did it all mean? And that word! he had noticed it on several pages, why in the deuce couldn't he write so a civilised person could read! Ah, here it is again, and he spelled it out: "F-l-a-p-do- flapdoodle. Flapdoodle! By Jove! Does he mean to insult me? Damned if I don't get him to put on the gloves to-night! He doesn't call *that* criticism, does he? Flapdoodle!"

But at the end of a week he thought better of it. He forgave Sam freely. After all, Sam was ten years his elder—and a head taller! As he studied over the margin the sixth time he began to be aware of Sam's ability. Of what infinite suggestiveness was his every mark! All it required was skill and good eyesight and that manuscript-story would yet be one of the most remarkable literary productions of the age. He determined some day to hire a surveyor and together they would rewrite it in accordance with Sam's drawings and specifications.

Thus it followed that, a year or so ago, when Mr. Goldsmith-Smith decided to enter a wider field of literary labour and usefulness than he had hitherto embraced, namely, book publisher and sole proprietor of a semi-monthly publication, the *Literary Sun*, he found himself in need of skilled assistance. Not at first, though; oh, no, not at first. At the start he felt that he could easily carry the entire burden of the business with the aid of a couple of stenographers. But it didn't go; his criticisms were not acceptable. Certain jealous contemporaries had a way of calling him "Phaeton" Smith, and making invidious observations on the erratic course of the sun. Accordingly he had gone to Sam and begged him to come and "steer the *Sun*" for him and at a salary in keeping with the dignity of that glorious office; with the result that at the end of three

months their semi-monthly publication was ceasing to be called by the derisive name of "Smith's Moon," and was beginning to glow with authentic effulgence.

"It seems to me, Sam," said Oliver, laying aside the manuscript "that Dr. Kenneth Moore has some very peculiar ideas. No, I don't think we can afford to publish anything of this kind. He puts a false colour on life; is an egotist of the darkest dye."

And he laid aside the manuscript with a sigh, as if for valuable time utterly wasted in its perusal.

CHAPTER VI.

SUPERSTITION AND FACT.

"You believe, then, that I could put the money to better purpose, do you, Kenneth?"

"Oh, yes; I am positive you can. You see how it is, Mr. Ludington, the university is in no particular need of funds to further the cause of higher education. Indeed, education of that kind is about the last thing on earth that our people are suffering for. Mr. Rockland furnishes plenty of money for that sort of thing, you know—for scattering human intelligence and obscuring real issues and vital necessities."

Mr. Ludington frowned. "You are not very loyal, Kenneth, it seems to me, to the principles of your institution."

The younger man's eyes gleamed, and he leaned forward in his chair as he replied. "No, Mr. Ludington, I'm not loyal to that mistaken philanthropy. I despise it for its wickedness and duplicity. Why, if one-tenth of the money that is now given for the cause of so-called higher education were applied in a business-like manner to the economic relief of

humanity, poverty would be banished from our land within the next two or three years."

"Charity—is that what you mean?"

"Oh, no, good heavens, no! What I mean, Mr. Ludington, is that if you will take this money you contemplate giving to the university and apply it to the purchase of land and the erection of suitable factories for the unemployed here in the outskirts of this city, in two or three years we shall have no unemployed—people will no longer need to beg for the merest right to work and live."

Mr. Ludington started. "Ah, you mean I might erect a poorhouse, my lad? Humph! I don't quite fancy the notion, somehow."

Kenneth smiled. "No, Mr. Ludington," he urged, patiently, "you don't appreciate the fact that the poorhouse, as we know it to-day, is an exclusive institution designed simply for chronic paupers. On the other hand, young and able-bodied men and women honestly seeking work have no place to turn—they must starve or commit suicide. It is my firm conviction that our American cities must establish shops and farms for this constantly growing class of people where they may support themselves decently and respectably, without disgrace. Well, if our cities refuse to take action in this matter our rich men must. It is the crying need of the hour. Wouldn't you feel like initiating this movement, sir?"

Mr. Ludington said nothing. It was not pleasant to be balked in this manner with the bold statement that his contemplated gift of one hundred thousand dollars to the Rockland University was unwise, ill-advised, even wrong, in the face of a starving humanity. As everyone knew, philanthropic people had been satisfying that innate desire for the esteem of their fellow-beings in this manner for

hundreds of years, and hitherto none had dared question such beneficence. But now, here was this young man, with his head full of all kinds of visionary schemes, telling him that there was more necessity for municipal work-shops just at present than for furthering scientific speculations on the evidences of life and Christianity on the planet Mars. He had hoped to endow the astronomical department.

"You know, Kenneth," he protested, quietly stroking his white side-whiskers, "that despite my long friendship with your father, we always differed sadly over what are called the questions of the hour. Such have never interested me, I may say, chiefly, perhaps, because I feel that such questions always right themselves best in the course of time, hence it is worse than idle for a man to fret over them."

"Yes, I know," answered Kenneth gravely, again leaning back in his chair. "It is a very comfortable philosophy, this one of *laissez faire*. Under its restful influence all that any man need do is to stay at home and read Herbert Spencer and let the evils go on gathering force till they overthrow themselves by their own weight. Meanwhile you believe in furnishing aid to animal and vegetable life, to art, education, science—but when it comes to starving humanity you say peremptorily: 'Leave it alone!'"

Again the old gentleman was taken aback; and noting it, Kenneth added hastily: "Believe me, Uncle Amos, I do not question your goodness of heart in all this, but simply your methods. It all comes from your isolation—you fail to see the hungry, miserable world as it is. This is probably why you differed from my father, whose life brought him into such intimate relations with the people. However, if you will consent to come with me a few hours this afternoon, I am confident that you will

be able to see with your own eyes that everyday life itself invites your assistance quite as much as the cause of higher education."

It was the day named by Dr. Griggs; and though Kenneth had been apprehensive all along lest something might happen at the last moment to prevent that gentleman from keeping his appointment, he had scarcely won Mr. Ludington's consent to accompany them when his door bell rang and Dr. Griggs came in. There were yet evidences on his countenance of wavering, suffering, and self-restraint, and when he gave Kenneth his hand it was somewhat too much as though he had said:

"Well, do with me what you wish. I shall try and stand it—for three hours!"

Twenty minutes later they were passing in with the crowd at one of the doors of the mammoth department stores of Moses, Jones and Co., which was perhaps the most ultra-fashionable store of the city. Its trade was enormous; everyone marvelled how it could sell goods of such excellent quality at such ridiculously low prices. It was a fascinating question, and one that Kenneth had studied with constantly widening interest. One saw on every hand how dozens of small competitors had been forced to close their doors one after another, whereas this store, with three or four of its kind, had gone on increasing its space, adding story to story and multiplying its revenues despite the ominous mutterings of its bankrupt rivals, who had organised themselves into a "business-men's association" to protest against this new and dangerous machine in retail industry.

"You do not believe in department-stores, I suppose, Professor Moore?" asked Dr. Griggs, uncertainly, himself glancing around with approval.

Kenneth turned; they were standing at the moment in the cloak department where various stylish

garments were displayed at hitherto unheard of prices. "Oh, yes," he replied; "you see the department-store is simply a gigantic machine, after all. It might be of great service and benefit to the public. However, like all other machinery to-day, instead of simplifying the problem of existence, it has obviously made it only the more difficult for some people to exist at all. The owners of the machine become wealthier and the slaves who operate it starve. I wanted you to see these cloaks. Please note them closely. We will now go where they are made."

It was already past four o'clock, and, being late in the fall, the day was beginning to darken. After waiting some time on a street corner a car came along, much too small for the crowd, but they entered; considering themselves fortunate at being permitted to pay their fare and hang on to a strap all the way.

"Dear me! does this car always smell like this?" asked Dr. Griggs in disgust. "It's an outrage; the company ought to be arrested!"

"Unfortunately, it's not the car that smells, but the people. They never wash—it is too expensive."

"Never wash? My goodness! Won't we catch some disease? That's an awful smell!"

The passengers were mostly working people, men and women, of various nationalities. Two sisters of some pessimistic religious order sat near the stove, their eyes fastened on two little books in black flexible leather covers stamped with a gilt cross. Their lips moved inaudibly, automatically; they saw nothing, heard nothing, smelled nothing. What was the use—was not their religion sufficient? They could not change the world if they tried; moreover no one was supposed to be happy in this world, and as for bad smells—well, things would smell better in the next world, too;

that is, if nothing got burnt! Though to Kenneth it was always a source of mingled amusement and indignation to observe how this so-called Christianity had so steeped the people in the very dregs of pessimism that they were mostly content to leave this world to the devil and the capitalists, whilst vainly pinning their only hopes of happiness on some visionary realm of God and the dead.

As for Mr. Ludington, he merely stood there clinging to the strap whilst the car bumped slowly onward, wondering vaguely why it was that this young man, the son of his old friend, had chosen a profession that could only keep him in hot water all his life when he might have selected something more comfortable.

Quitting the car, they made their way down a swarming cross street whose every dilapidated frame building, crowded from basement to ceiling, bore witness to the poverty of the community. Women passed, carrying great bundles in their arms and on their heads; and children, children that swarmed! Little tots scarcely able to walk, streamed past with pails and pitchers, dodging into the first convenient saloon. In front of one of these places stood a white-haired old man playing the violin. A moment before he had been singing, now he was playing the *Marseillaise*. He played it well, with considerable feeling.

Kenneth handed him a quarter, and they passed on.

The old man turned and looked after him in astonishment, with curious wonder. It may have been the size of the tip.

"Ah, it's such a pity, professor," sighed Dr. Griggs, "that the saloon should be the most inviting spot in all this region. It is this awful drinking that makes poverty."

But the professor shook his head. "I beg your pardon, sir, but I can't agree with you. For example, if you were passing along the street some dark night, Dr. Griggs, and should meet two men who commanded you to halt and throw up your hands, one of the men rifling your pockets whilst the other offered you a glass of beer, would it make any difference whether you drank the beer or not so far as having your pocket picked is concerned? No; in all fairness you would thank the good Samaritan who offered you the drink. Well, that is the way it is with these poor people. Society has picked their pockets ever since they were born—you will see how it is done."

A moment later they were climbing the shaky stairs to the top floor of one of those tumble-down tenements. At the landing their ears were greeted by the clatter and whirr of sewing-machines, interrupted perhaps for a second, and then flying on faster than ever, as though seeking wildly to overtake the little moment that had been lost. There was no name on the door, but knowing the place, Kenneth knocked.

A little old man, racial in every manner and feature, opened the door part way and looked out. "Ah, it is Mr. Moore," he said with characteristic accent. "You wish to come in?"

"If you please, Mr. Exstein," answered Kenneth. "Are you still at work on those cloaks for Moses, Jones and Co.?"

The old man grinned and held the door open. "Oh ya, it vas a fine gontract." He had bid the lowest of anyone; too low, in fact. However, all his workers would now be forced to toil sixteen hours daily instead of fourteen. This would be sure to leave a small *brofit*; then Moses, Jones and Co. would have a very good *brofit*, too, and the poor fashionable peo-

ple would get their clothes so cheap! Ah, it was all a wonderful system—this *brofit* system! It made the rich richer and the poor poorer. By-and-by the poorest would die and become straightway the richest in heaven. Such was the great gomfort of Gristianity!

After this manner the old man complained, whilst they filed through a dark passage to an inner room perhaps thirty feet square where fully fifty men, women and children of all ages sat working. There was a nervous intensity on their faces and in their every act; the entrance of the visitors excited no attention, no remark; they were intent wholly on finishing those elegant broadcloth coats for Moses, Jones and Co. One child—she might have been twelve years old—was wearing one of the garments whilst she worked on another. The room was dimly lighted with oil lamps, and was heated only with a cook-stove at the farther end of the room where an old woman stood stirring an unsavoury kettle.

Dr. Griggs sniffed the atmosphere suspiciously. If possible, it was worse than that street car.

“Do these people eat here, Kenneth?” queried Mr. Ludington, in evident distress at the sight.

The professor nodded. “Of course; they can do nothing else; they scarcely go away day or night. They are no longer free agents. This is one of those hells written of by Charles Kingsley fifty years ago, in *Alton Locke*, when the people in this country were congratulating themselves that we had no industrial horrors of the sort that put England to shame. Well, you perceive we are to-day exactly where England was at that time.”

He spoke in low tones, gravely, repressing his feelings as best he might. The machines clattered on; anon some toiler changed his position slightly, and for an instant the visitors would be aware of a

mute, wondering gaze fixed upon them as if questioning dully how it was that some people could find the time to watch other people toil. At one of these moments the eye of a woman near by caught Kenneth's, and, smiling in recognition, he turned to his companions—

“You see that woman over there, working here—with her four children?”

Dr. Griggs was indignant. “Yes, yes, professor,” he cried impatiently, “but why don't they quit it? Why under heavens don't they walk out of this hole and keep out! No one compels them to stay, I suppose?”

That there was anything childish, even foolish in this question doubtless did not occur to the minister. If people didn't like to work at one thing, let them do something else. Such had always been his philosophy, and he found it adequate for all occasions.

“She will probably be able to answer you better than I can,” said Kenneth, as they moved across to the little group. He had known her for some time. For months past he had been trying to find a place for them in the world outside the sweat-shop. He had not succeeded.

“Ah, why don't we leave here—is that what you asked, sir?” she said, wearily, without pausing in her work as she replied to Dr. Griggs' query following his kindly greeting. “Perhaps you think it is because we are not fit for anything else. Well, I can't tell you; I don't know. You should have asked Carl. The professor knew him—my oldest boy, he was fourteen. Ah, it was Carl who meant to get us all out of here—if he had lived.” She looked up, helplessly, her eyes suddenly wet with tears. “Carl thought to find work outside. He believed as you do, sir, that God is good to the world;

that there is more than enough for every living being, and that it is man only who is cruel and foolish. Someone told him of the great fruit crops across the lake, and how pickers were needed. So he left here in the middle of summer and made his way to the farms. But when he got there, poor boy! the farmers had stopped picking; all their men had been discharged and the fruit was rotting on the ground. There was so much fruit that it did not pay to pick it—and we here in the shop, we had only broth and black bread!”

She paused a moment, thoughtfully, whilst Dr. Griggs admitted during the interval that such conditions of overproduction were really most unfortunate, most deplorable. “It upsets all the established laws of trade and causes much unavoidable suffering, I have no doubt,” said he consolingly.

The woman glanced at him a moment, then continued: “And so Carl, after begging for work from house to house and finding nothing, finally came back and took up his old work. But he had always been so full of hope, so eager; but now he was disappointed and discouraged. He began to brood over it, having seen that it was not because of any real lack of food that the world suffered, but by reason of foolish customs. There was bread and meat and fruit more than enough for everyone, he used to say, but the poor people could not get any, couldn’t even find work enough to enable them to buy it of the rich who owned it. And thinking of it so, and talking with some of the men here in the shop, Carl became a socialist; he saw no other way by which any of us could ever get out of here.”

“Dear me! a socialist!” repeated Dr. Griggs aghast. “But my good woman, wasn’t your boy a Christian? Did he never pray?”

She shook her head. “Pray? What good would

that do?" she asked. "You pray to God to put new strength in the sun and new vigour in the soil in order that you may have more bountiful crops, more wheat, more meat, more fruit, when you already have too much and complain of overproduction! No; Carl thought it was blasphemy to mock God in that way. The more God answers such prayers the harder it becomes for the poor to live at all."

Doctor Griggs said nothing; this was a most appalling discovery. Of course he knew it couldn't be true; the unfortunate woman's brain was probably crazed. However, he ventured no reply; he wanted time to think it over. He knew in general that overproduction was one of the worst things that could befall the world, and began to wonder dimly if it wouldn't be wiser to pray God to stop being bountiful and send us a famine instead. Still, such were a most anomalous prayer; he could not quite decide the matter—not yet.

The woman was crying, softly; he seemed unable to find words to console her. They moved away to the further end of the room where an old man was pressing the cloaks.

"What became of that woman's boy, professor?" he asked finally, unable to conceal the uncomfortable impression the story had made.

"Who, Carl? I beg your pardon, I thought she told you that he committed suicide."

"What! that child? Only fourteen years old!"

Kenneth made no reply. He might have explained how the boy Carl was brighter than the average; how he had longed to become a leader and guide his people out of bondage; how in order to do this he knew that he must first have an education, and how this for him was impossible; how the hours had become constantly longer and longer;

how people with such temperaments are sometimes crazed by the pressure, the mountains of impossibility—children especially; how the best were destroyed and the most brutal and stolid survived. But he said nothing. If Dr. Griggs were honest he could see these things for himself, as no one could tell him.

They spoke to others of the workers, receiving in general courteous replies, save for one who resented the tone of one of the minister's queries somewhat bitterly. "Oh, yes; we are here because we like it, of course; it is such a nice place to work and the hours and surroundings are so pleasant. We can any of us leave when we choose; all we need to do is to find work somewhere else. We all have the same opportunities; it is a free country."

It was past six o'clock, and, though the workers showed no sign of ceasing, Kenneth and his party were on the point of leaving when there came a loud peremptory knock at the door. The old man who had admitted them opened it, and a policeman entered. He was attired in very fine clothes, and had a very red face. He walked unsteadily.

"Look here, now, Mr. Exstein," he said loudly, regardless of the visitors, and with all the aggressiveness of his race clearly heightened by his occupation, "ye've got to have more vintilation here or pay me more money. It's aginst the law to crowd the poor divils like this."

The embodiment of law and compassion moved down the room, scattering his objections as he went. If Mr. Eckstein persisted in cooking in this room he must pay five dollars a month for "protection."—the policeman had come into his office with the republican administration, and manifestly all the principles of that glorious party were instinct in his being. As for "vintilation," it would cost Mr. Eck-

stein two hundred dollars to pay a carpenter to remodel the room; the cheaper way would be to pay the policeman ten dollars a month.

"I'll give you two days to t'ink it over," said he; whilst the old man wrung his hands in despair, following him and exclaiming at intervals: "Ach! Mr. Largkins, it vill ruin us. Ve are such boor beebles. It can't be done."

"But I say it *must* be done, Mr. Eckstein. Ye're huntin' throuble wid the law. It's for the likes of yez that it's made. By Saint Patrick!—" He came to a pause, sniffing the atmosphere with sudden disgust. "I say, me friend," he continued, reaching out with his club and striking a workman on the elbow, "what danged dead thing have ye got in this room? Why the devil don't ye kape clean?"

The tailor spoken to was an American by the name of Williams, one of the most rapid of workmen and usually one of the quietest about the shop. Failing to find work elsewhere, he generally appeared to be working the harder, as if to drown all consciousness of his misfortunes. The policeman's ungentle interruption had joggled his arm and caused him to prick his finger. He jumped up angrily, dropping his work with an oath.

"Keep clean? you drunken fool!" he shouted. "What have we got to do with keeping clean? Can't you see we are not fed and clothed by the city as you are? No; it's bread we're after—bread! bread! bread! all day and all night! We have no time to keep clean!"

The policeman's face became purple. "Hush!" and he struck the man heavily on the shoulder. "Be quiet, now, or I'll run ye in."

Stung by the blow and the threat, without waiting an instant the tailor snatched up a lamp from his sewing-machine and dashed it full in the policeman's

face. The latter staggered a moment, sought to recover himself, then fell with a crash to the floor. There was a bright flash; every light in the room went out with the explosion. The women screamed; all rushed headlong for the door.

"Look out! you can't get out that way!"

A sheet of flame shot up to the ceiling, effectually cutting off the door and proving that the warning had come none too soon. Quickly the crowd turned, making for the window in the rear of the shop.

There was a flat roof ten feet below, upon which the women and children were hastily dropped and the men followed with the flames at their heels; thence by other roofs, scuttles, and dark passages to the second story of a neighboring tenement-dwelling where the firemen in the street below came to their assistance.

"Thank God!" Dr. Griggs exclaimed fervently, as they pushed their way out through the crowd.

"Are you all right, Uncle Amos?" Kenneth asked anxiously, and added: "I should never have led you into such a fire-trap."

The old gentleman shook himself together. "No, my lad, I shall be content to take your word for it hereafter," and he laughed. "However, let us be thankful we're out of it. Can you find us a carriage, Kenneth?"

But they were not out of it yet; by this time the buildings adjoining were wrapped in a flaming whirlpool; men and women rushed hither and thither, risking their lives to save those hovels of misery and degradation. Slaves know of nothing so sacred as shackles; being fettered and bound so long, they naturally come to feel a respect akin to religion for the thing that binds them. Meanwhile a cry rose up from the crowd—someone had been left behind in the burn-

ing shop. "Larkins! the policeman!" they shouted, whilst the firemen fought their way up through the flames only to be driven back again and again, till at last the building fell in with a crash. A gang of policemen could be seen searching the crowd for Williams—Williams, the tailor at bay who had pricked his finger, who had thrown the lamp; "Williams the murderer," as the people whispered fearfully, whilst still fighting in vain to save some portion of their paltry belongings that were being ruthlessly consumed as in manifest accordance with that divine dictum of "from him that hath nothing even that little which he hath shall be taken."

"If that man is caught," said Dr. Griggs, as they crowded their way out, "I suppose he will be tried and hanged." Events were plainly too swift for him; doubt struggled up in his voice.

"Oh, most assuredly," Kenneth answered with a laugh; "the victim is always hanged when caught!"

At the corner of a street where they passed a crowd was gathered in front of a saloon. An old man with white hair stood in the center, fiddling the *Marseillaise*.

CHAPTER VII.

GOING DOWN!

"You see, Sam, we can't afford to accept any more manuscript from unknown authors. They don't pay, and it's time we quit trying to run an eleemosynary institution. Now there's that manuscript of Moore's—you might know he would write in that style; it's his way. I know him, he was a classmate of mine. Confound him! he's eternally trying to swim beneath the surface, seeing things that other people

care nothing about. Well, it's no use; we can't publish his book."

Sam ventured no protest.

"Of course, old man," Smith went on, "I'm not questioning your judgment at all when it comes to determining the true literary worth of a manuscript. Not at all! But there's that story you liked so well, the *Rhapsodist*, you know; it was so light, so delicate, didn't really seem to go below the surface. Well, it ought to have made a hit; but hang it all! why didn't it? Didn't we get it out in good shape and advertise it in full page descriptions in the *Sun* and other leading journals? But that's the way with the public—it's an ass! Why, it's the way all my own books have gone latterly, and can't I write better now than I did at first?"

"Really, Oliver, I hope so," Sam agreed without looking up from his work.

"Of course, it stands to reason," said Oliver, beginning to stride up and down; "experience, growth, the development of my art, you know, Sam. However, I say that we've got to fall strictly in line. Not another manuscript from a strange author until we are rich—and that's flat!"

Sam had nothing to say; that part of the business was Oliver's funeral, he merely gave his advice when asked.

"I wish you would write some letters to-day, Sam," the other continued, "to some of these writers whose books are having a run. Offer them whatever you like. Still, it's enough to sour a man on the whole miserable occupation, isn't it, now? I mean this buying books from authors with a name, before ever the story is conceived. And what kind of stuff do they give us in return? Oh, it's rotten, rotten! Four or five books a year from these famous humbugs who reel it out by the yard, and I'll bet

any money that there's better stuff in that pile of unavailable over there in the corner. Why, it's not fair; not fair to the unknown whose manuscripts come in to the publishing houses only to be piled up unread and returned at the end of thirty days with a 'not available' inside. Sam, if I hadn't got into this devilish publishing business I'd write a book myself for once that should go below the surface. I'd startle the public with some of these facts. And what's more, if I couldn't write better than some of those fellows whose unborn manuscripts you are soliciting, I shouldn't write at all—I'd wait for ten years until I had an idea."

Sam continued his work. "Very praiseworthy, Oliver, I'm sure," he replied. "But I should think twice about that if I were you; ten years is a very short time. However, if you say the word, I'll add a postscript to these letters giving them the benefit of our editorial opinion—about waiting ten years, I mean."

"Oh, shut up, Sam! You know we've got to live. Ah, and here comes another one!"

The "other one,"—dreaded, scorned, and avoided—closed the door after her and stood a moment with feet that hesitated, though her eyes and the quick turn of the head seemed to sweep the office and take an inventory of its contents at a glance. She was a young woman, slightly below the medium height; her dress, one noted immediately, was never of any style; whilst her hair, wavy and brown, hung almost in ringlets and curls—certainly of an arrangement to attract attention at once by its obsolescence.

Oh, yes, she's another one all right, Oliver observed to himself, continuing his march up and down. And she's either from the country, or has wheels. She's too pretty to know anything. Now if she would only take that manuscript under her

arm, and pile it right over there on top of the unavailable it would be promptly returned to her at the end of thirty days and no questions asked. But she won't; they never do. Confound this business! it's ruining my style—that's what every one says. My old publishers even tell me I ought to quit it.

The girl glanced at the young man pacing up and down with his head bent. No, he was certainly not the man; but ah, there he was, over at that desk! She glided over there; she might have taken one step or a dozen, one couldn't say. Or she might have leapt.

"Oh, are you Mr. Goldsmith-Smith?" she chirruped.

Sam jumped. How bird-like the voice was, nor could he have been startled more if it had been a meadowlark. And what innocent blue eyes she had.

"Ah, I beg your pardon, miss," he apologised, "I didn't hear you enter. Won't you sit down? There at that desk, if you please. Yes, Mr. Goldsmith-Smith is in. I'll call him." Her back was towards him as she sat down; he stood up and beckoned his employer.

"Come, she wants to see you," he waved.

"The devil! see her yourself," came the protest.

"But I can't; she asked for you—and you're here."

"Then I'll go."

"Come back, I say; I told her you're here!"

"But I can't—it's spoiling my style."

"Confound your style!—Yes, miss; he's coming directly."

And Sam sat down and resumed his work. A critic must draw the line somewhere, and he wasn't going to listen to that young thing talk about her book, flooding his sophisticated ears with the music of her unsophisticated dreams. No, not whilst Mr. Goldsmith-Smith had nothing to do but pace the

floor. And he wrote savagely: "My dear Miss Jones,—We regret to say that we find your story unavailable."

"Oh, then you are Mr. Goldsmith-Smith," said the "other one" as that gentleman finally reached his desk. "Oh, I am so surprised!"

She looked even more than her words; disappointed, even. At any rate, she did not smile on him so sunnily as she had on Sam.

"Very sorry, I'm sure;" that's what the girl heard him say, and what Sam heard him say, but what he really said internally was: The little fool!—"But what can I do for you?"

"Oh, Mr. Smith—Mr. Goldsmith-Smith! I really didn't mean that. I was only surprised to find you so—so young."

The devil! she certainly had an original style; a sansculotte, possibly, unconventional in the extreme. Or was she guying him? He glowered at her; then he glowered at Sam. The latter had his head down within an inch of his work.

"I knew you did such a perfectly enormous business, you know, sir——"

"Yes, oh yes," that gentleman agreed, dubiously.

"And so," she continued, but growing fearful; "I have brought you my new story——"

"Pardon me, your new story? Then you have written before?" Ah, she was really a genius, perhaps, he thought.

She coloured, seemed confused for a moment. "N-no, not exactly; that is, nothing of any consequence, sir."

He scanned her closely for the first time. Ah, it was too bad! How pretty she was when she blushed! Her cheeks were so plump, and the every curve of her body so graceful, so fresh, so natural; without padding or stays, he would swear. She was fresh

butter and eggs and ripe cherries; he would have bet any money that she would dare a leap from the highest rafter in the hay-loft and rise sweeter than Venus from the fragrant waves below. Now why did she want to go and write a book! In all his experience as an author and publisher he had heard of but one girl of that kind who had ever done it successfully.

"You didn't give me your name," he said, somewhat more courteously.

"Nannette"—she stammered, and halted.

Smith shied. No, that name was unknown, it would never do. He might as well tell her at once.

"I'm sorry, Miss Nannette. But we have made it a rule to accept no more manuscripts from new writers,—from those without fame."

"Oh, but," she urged quickly, "you never can tell, sir, you know. Now, I'm sure Mr. So-and-so, and So-and-so"—she mentioned a few of their writers—"are not famous!"

He sighed. "No, Miss Nan——"

"Nielsen; Nannette Nielsen," she corrected.

It was all the same—the name was unknown. "No, Miss Nielsen; these men were not famous, and we found it out to our cost. Their books didn't sell."

She was silent. The great world seemed to be crushing all the life and glad spirits out of her. She had been to six publishing houses that morning—and they had all told her the same. She had purposely chosen the O. G. Goldsmith-Smith Co. for the last trial.

But no; she would not stand it. Was she to be judged by the failures of others, instead of on her merits, the fruits of her own personality? It was too ridiculous!

"My book is so different, sir—I'm sure it is. Now, if I could only leave it——"

"Oh, yes; by all means," Smith clutched; "of course you may leave it with us, Miss Nielsen. What is the address? You live out of town, I presume."

Her eyes snapped. "No, indeed! Why, how could you think so, sir?"

His eyes fell precipitately beneath hers as he grasped his pencil. "Oh, I didn't *think* so, Miss Nielsen—I merely asked it. You know, most of our authors do. Chicago isn't a literary center. But it will be all right. We'll return it properly. What is the address?"

She hesitated. Could he really do such a mean thing as she feared? "No, I don't want you to return it," she persisted stubbornly. "I'll call. What would be the best time to come, sir?"

"Well," said he slowly; "you see our readers are very busy; there's all that pile over there," waving his hand towards the unavailable; "but suppose we say a month or six weeks."

"A month?" she cried helplessly. "O goodness me! I can't possibly wait that long. Why, I must make my living—and by writing. Oh, say a week, Mr. Smith—Mr. Goldsmith-Smith; say a week! I've been to nearly every publishing house in town;" her eyelids trembled, the corners of her mouth drooped dangerously.

He compromised quickly. A week, a day—an hour if she said so!

"Oh, no, sir; you are so kind; but a week will do." She was all rainbows now. What a chameleon creature it was—and it, it must make a living!

"Good-by," she sang out; "I thank you so much, Mr. Goldsmith-Smith; and you too," including Sam in her sunbeam. And again at the door: "I know you will enjoy it; or anyway I hope you will—almost as much as I did in writing it. Good-by."

Smith collapsed. "Sam, you old idiot! why didn't

you stop her? Why did you let her run on like that. Now what shall I do?"

Sam scribbled dispassionately. "Do? Why, read her story."

"The devil! how can I? Haven't I got my own story to work on—and doesn't the *Sun* have to come out next week? Now I tell you what I'm going to do," and he jumped up and grabbed his hat and overcoat. "I'm going home—I shan't be down again for a week! Damn this business—and don't you accept any stories from strange authors! Do you hear?" And Smith passed out, slamming the door behind him, and shouting at the passing elevator: "Going down! damn it, going down!"

Sam wrote on. He was in the midst of a review; but noting that it was becoming an excoriation, he stopped. Confound him, he thought; why does a man want to act that way? Has he got to be a child all his life? And that little young thing who left her book here in good faith thinking it would be read! Humph, I haven't time to look at it. Well, I'll hand it to Mrs. Phillips. At least we'll give it a reading, and Smith may do what he pleases.

CHAPTER VIII.

NANNETTE.

"Kenneth, I'm sure we can't go on this way much longer. Your income is so small. Have the publishers accepted your manuscript?"

It was the old complaint; they were sitting at breakfast, the problems of the day frowning before them. "No, not yet," he admitted. "I must

call and see them. However——” he hesitated, doubtfully.

“Well, dear?”

“I was only going to ask, Mabel, what you would think about selling this place and buying a less expensive home? That would be one way out.”

Mabel said nothing. Poor girl! having been inured to comfort, provided for luxuriously all her life, she was now beginning to understand that the Nile, in the shape of some generous and improvident physician and guardian, would never again overflow its banks to freshen the flowers along her pathway, and that King Midas' touch was not exactly identical with that of the college professor's—save perhaps with Dr. Little's.

“Dr. Little receives ten thousand a year,” she said musingly; “you know we could be quite comfortable on half that. And I'm sure you work just as hard as he does.”

He smiled. “Unfortunately, that isn't the point, you know.”

“But it seems too bad to have to sell your old home,” she continued. “Of course if we had been reckless, or extravagant, or done anything to deserve it. Can't I do something, Kenneth?” suddenly, grasping at anything. “How would it do to take a boarder? A lady called here yesterday and wanted me to take her. She would pay six dollars a week.”

He glanced up. “Would she?” he asked curiously. “Humph! we might try it for awhile, at least. What does she do—the boarder?”

“She is an authoress, she said.”

“Dear me! an authoress—at six dollars a week! Was she so very homely?”

To think that his family should be reduced to such straits!

Mabel laughed. “Oh, no, not at all,” she de-

clared. "Indeed you would be quite surprised. She's only a young girl, green, and no style, yet awfully pretty. She's from the country and has come here to have her book published."

It was certainly tempting, even urgent. Enough to arouse the interest of a man who was not pretending to pose as a social reformer.

"Why, in that case, Mabel, you better take her; that is, if you are sure she won't cause you too much trouble. But is her manuscript accepted?"

Mabel shook her head. "She doesn't know yet. She is coming back to-morrow morning. I told her I'd consider it. She is particularly desirous of coming here because we live so close in town."

Two days later, accordingly, the boarder arrived, with a diminutive trunk and a small leather violin-case on which was printed in irregular white letters: "Nannette Nielsen." The latter Kenneth was especially pleased to see; it was eloquent of delightful winter evenings with charming trios. For he knew she could play; merely to look at her was proof enough of that, though she told scarcely anything of herself, her training, till she had been with them some time. And that she had accomplished so much—this was the wonder of it when they knew her story.

When she was six years old—which was fourteen years ago—her parents had left France for America; thence to the West, and final settlement on a little farm in Iowa. Here they had prospered fairly. But the unceasing toil, with winters of Greenland and summers that simmered, had worn her mother out, and her father had afterwards married a woman of native stock. Under this spur Nannette had attended the village schools; had cooked and carried and fetched by day for the step-mother's annual brood, and studied and written and dreamed by

night. As for her music, all the instruction she ever received had been at the hands of her mother; her violin was only a plaything; she never thought it would bring her money. Meanwhile the time arrived for her to declare her total unbelief in the gods that prevailed. She had written and published one little story under a pseudonym, and it had been a failure, or so her publishers declared. She had another one ready now; it had gone to ten publishers and been returned with the most polite letters she had ever read. Some, indeed, seemed almost too polite to be honest; they could never refuse a manuscript after speaking so highly of it as all that! However, she would just go to the city and see.

Whereupon arose strenuous objections. "Don't you give her a penny, Peer—not a penny! Do you hear?" screamed the mother of unborn generations.

But Pierre had felt otherwise. She was his little Nannette—and he thought of her mother! No, this farm was no place for the child; but some two or three years before he had been in Des Moines to buy a threshing-machine, and in the office of the firm he had been amazed at the sight of so many pretty and well-dressed girls operating typewriters. Now, he asked, why couldn't Nannette do that? He had no faith in her stories or violin; but when she asked for permission to leave home, and for a little—a very little money, he had told her to wait for three months. Then he sent for one of those typewriters and informed her that she must master it; the world would be found willing to pay, probably, for that kind of music. Accordingly, at the end of three months she was an accomplished performer, playing it with her eyes shut and in all sorts of rhythm and time, with a merry little *tink-a-link* here and there so that one could almost see the birds fluttering about her manuscript as she wrote.

"Lander love, Peer! it's ez good a'mos' ez a pian-ner," the step-mother had observed, wallowing helplessly in the plenitude of a sensation. So that this good woman could only gasp and stare with blank amaze when that wonderful machine was finally packed off to the city with Nannette, and with one hundred dollars of "Peer's" money sewed in the lining of that young woman's gown.

"Where did you say you left your manuscript, Nannette?" asked Mabel, as they sat in the library.

Nannette named the firm—the O. G. Goldsmith-Smith Publishing Co. "But they didn't want it," she declared frankly: "I know they didn't. Oh dear! do you think they will take it, professor?"

The professor didn't know; he was puzzled. It was in general such a hopeless thing to expect, especially when he knew that only nine per cent of all manuscripts offered were ever accepted. Still, Nannette was original; this might make a difference.

"I wish I could have read it," he said. "But you can be sure of one thing, it will come under the notice of one of the most competent readers in this city. I mean Mr. Kent."

"Oh, was he that man with dark eyes and dark hair?—you know I spoke to him, too," and she laughed. Obviously Sam had impressed her.

"Yes; his opinion will be worth having. But you didn't tell me the name of your story?"

Her eyes fell. "You might not like it. The name might prejudice you."

"I hate to have you think me prejudiced," he insisted, "even in general."

She looked him over. "No, really, I don't think so—I think you are wonderfully free. Only you may be quite intolerant, you know, and not know it."

"You might try me, at any rate," he answered, with amusement.

"Well, it's called, it's called—*The Desert Isle*."

He gave a start. Yes, it certainly did arouse prejudice; hitherto undiscoverable. Good heavens! couldn't she have found a better name? Had her bubbling young life really been like that?

"There now, you don't like it! Does he, Mrs. Moore? And you don't either. Oh dear! what shall I do?"

Her helplessness was adorable. Mabel wondered why she hadn't chosen the stage. It mightn't be too late yet if her book didn't succeed, she thought.

Kenneth laughed. "Why Nannette—I—I confess that it startled me a little. Still, I don't know that a desert isle would be so bad—anyway, not if you were there. And, besides, you know that's all that literature is, merely the reflection of the writer's personality. Otherwise it would have perished and ceased to be fresh centuries ago."

Nannette clasped her hands, her face brightened. "Ah, that is so good of you, professor. You know, I've often thought it was that way, too. I've tried to write only like myself."

"Yes, that's true," the professor repeated dogmatically; "it's a scientific fact. Force and the organism are constantly changing, hence the expression is always fresh. That's the explanation. So now, if it is just like yourself it is sure to be attractive and we shall all love it. And if you will be so kind as to take your feet off of *Six Centuries of Work and Wages*, I shall go on with my work. Oh, no, you won't disturb me; you and Mabel may talk as much as you please."

An hour later, as he was drawing on his coat in the hall, Mabel entered. "Are you going out?" she asked.

"Only across the street; I shall be back presently," he replied hastily.

She frowned. "I do wish, Kenneth, that if you are going over to Mr. Ludington's you would avoid saying anything to offend him."

He paused, in surprise. "To offend him? But why should I offend him?"

"Pshaw! you know what I mean, Kenneth, only you are so regardless. You forget his wealth, and that all your theories are necessarily offensive to him. Moreover, I know from something he said to me that he was deeply disappointed because you disapproved of his gift to the astronomical department. Now don't make him think you have become a crank!" -

The professor grinned. "There are only two kinds of people in this world, my dear: fools and cranks. Good-by, I'll promise not to offend him unduly, even should he insist on buying a telescope."

But she caught him on the threshold. "Wait! one thing more," she cried. "You haven't forgotten about Tuesday evening, have you?"

He reflected quickly. "Tuesday evening? No, that's the date of my lecture at Wheeling."

"No, it isn't; that's the evening of Mrs. Adams' reception. Really, Kenneth, it would be shameful to miss that! Besides, I do wish you would give up your work among those labouring men. Champion that class all you wish in college, in public speaking, but for goodness sake don't let yourself come in contact with them—don't touch them; never let them call you one of themselves or take actual part in their disputes. If you do they will crucify you, some day. You will see, they can't help it; they are so hopelessly ignorant. Now do be sensible, Kenneth! Keep with your own class."

Again he paused, this time with some annoyance.

Ignoring her objections, he answered: "Indeed, Mabel, I don't know whom I can ask to take my place. I should have to turn the lecture over to Professor Lawrence, and you know we are not of the same faith." But seeing her disappointment, he added, quickly: "However, I'll try to arrange matters, somehow," and passed out.

Since their visit to Mr. Exstein's sweat-shop Kenneth had seen but little of Mr. Ludington, but that the revelation and the manner of it had been somewhat of a shock to the old gentleman he could readily understand; perhaps the sight and the argument had even been "offensive," as Mabel had just suggested. Still he hoped for some good to come out of it, sometime; for a day to come when the old gentleman would no longer have the heart to sit comfortably in his study philosophising over life whilst the many toiled and starved, or beguiling himself with the senile vagaries of Herbert Spencer to the effect that "the necessities which Nature imposes upon us are not to be evaded, even by the joint efforts of university graduates and working-men delegates; and the endeavour to escape her harsh discipline results in a discipline still harsher." No; he would convince Mr. Ludington that these frightful necessities, such, for instance, as sweat-shops, were not imposed upon human beings by Nature, but by the curse of private capital seeking to increase its profits: the only cure for which, he had frankly insisted, was to get rid of the whole miserable profit-system of doing business.

"Well, professor," said the old gentleman softly, as he replied to his greeting, "I will admit that I've been thinking of your proposition lately. However, I'm far from satisfied as to the practicability of municipal farms and workshops. It's too revolutionary."

Whereupon, accepting his challenge, for a full half hour the younger man proceeded to give in rapid detail somewhat of his accumulated knowledge of the subject; from Blackstone to Henry George, from the socialism of Christ to that of John Stuart Mill, there was not an inch of the way that he had not thoroughly travelled and made his own. The land, he maintained, was the common heritage of the people; for one man or set of men to allege ownership to any fraction thereof was to deny the balance of mankind the merest right to live. Of the naked truth of this proposition honest men of all ages and all countries had long been practically agreed. It was only where the suppression of truth was needed now and again in order to bolster up a tottering plutocracy that denials had been made. As Macaulay had once said, "The force of gravity would unquestionably be denied if financial interests were harmed by its acceptance." And so, in this manner, he went on to speak of the suffering and slavery entailed upon a people by the private ownership of land in India, Ireland, wherever Mammon had ravaged to suit its pleasure, and finally in this—the country which we called our own!

"But is this what you and your fellow professors are teaching to-day, Kenneth, in the university?" asked the old gentleman, astounded.

"Some of us, sir; but the pity of it is that there are a few professors left who, with reasons more or less dark and obscure, still continue substantially to teach that the earth is flat."

Mr. Ludington laughed. "You mean figuratively, of course?"

"No, not necessarily; just listen to this; it is from Professor Lawrence's text-book on economics. I quote from memory:

"In the economic sense, Rent is the payment

which an owner receives for the use of *natural agents*, such as land, whether arable or timber land, mineral deposits, water-power, or land peculiarly situated for building purposes. Rent is a payment, not for the use of another's capital, but for the use of *natural agents belonging to another*. Rent is possible because natural agents are not *unlimited* in quantity as air or sunshine is.' "

"Humph! that's strange!" sighed the old gentleman uneasily. "A mistake or a falsehood at the very start;" and, as Kenneth smiled he continued: "The professor ought to know, my son, that air and sunshine are just as much limited in quantity as the land is. They are limited, substantially, by and to the face of this earth. Of course there may be air and sunshine in Mars, but if so they do not concern us. The only reason that I can think of, Kenneth, why air and sunshine have not been monopolised in the same manner as *other natural agents belonging to another*"—and the old gentleman winked slyly at the professor's smug paradox—"is not because they are unlimited, but because the effects of their being monopolised would have been too sudden for the people to submit calmly. Yes, it is only when some old monopoly, such as land and vested rights, comes creeping insidiously but relentlessly down the ages, that men submit calmly and without a murmur for many a weary year. Such a proposition as this you have just quoted reminds me forcibly of the words of a dear old classmate: 'Sin has many tools, but a lie is the handle which fits them all.' "

And perceiving his advantage, Kenneth urged: "Ah, then you admit, Mr. Ludington, that there are giant wrongs and inequalities imposed upon the people, not by Nature, but by man's inordinate greed and selfishness—the desire of the few to per-

petuate slavery upon the many. Well, I appeal to your generosity, to your Democracy—is it fair? Here we are, a Republic, yet all our so-called free institutions and industries are founded upon the old fraudulent basis of worn-out monarchies and aristocracies. Do you think it can continue? Do you believe that any Republic or Democracy can stand long on such terms—where the few are engaged in the legalised robbery of the many?”

He spoke ardently, in low tones; and his words stirred the old man from his wonted languor as he cleared his voice, hesitated a moment, then attempted to reply.

“No; I don’t deny that there are wrongs, Kenneth; evils, too, that must grow worse as concentration of capital and new machinery continue to throw more and more men out of employment. Every millionaire freshly created means a thousand more paupers for society to support. Still, it is the remedy that I distrust more than the disease. I doubt whether your municipal farms and workshops would be best.”

Meanwhile he would consider it; there was never any hurry about such matters. “If the world needs workshops more than telescopes,” said he, “let the people manifest their desires.”

“Ah, but you forget, Mr. Ludington,” Kenneth sighed, leaning back in his chair wearily, “you forget that the people can no longer manifest their desires; that the men whom they elect to represent them have ceased to represent anything save the power of private capital and corruption.”

CHAPTER IX.

TANGENTS AND TYROS.

Meantime, by one of those strange mischances that now and then discovers an author to the world in spite of the thousand and one barriers, Nannette's manuscript had actually been read. It had come under Mr. Kent's eye, which is to say that the camel had passed through the needle's eye. And her story had been accepted.

On the day after her visit Sam had taken the manuscript out of purgatory and laid it on his desk preparatory to carrying it to Mrs. Phillips, who frequently read manuscripts for him. She had a fondness for a new story, and her judgment, he believed, was equal to any one's. "A woman's opinion, Oliver," he used to say, "may be safely trusted on a thing so unknowable as a story designed to please the public." A dictum that aroused no argument, inasmuch as he, as well as Sam, had been forced to admit his total incompetency time and again in estimating the wants of the fickle public that reads.

Accordingly, Sam boarded the train one evening, manuscript in his pocket; but when half way to Mrs. Phillips' a strange disinclination came over him; not wholly unknown to him, but of that species that seizes a man now and then, at unexpected moments, and causes him to halt and turn back, though he were bound for the very temple of delight. Some stalking vision of that sub-conscious self, perhaps, that shadows one, whispering the eternal folly of flight, of other company, when one can never cease but be alone. At any rate he went no farther, but got off at the first station and caught the next train

back to the city. Entering a neighbouring hotel, he glanced over the theatre announcements—melodrama, soubrettes, women in tights, but naught that interested him. Thence to the street again, and an aimless walk of two blocks, when he found himself in front of the business house where he had worked for over twenty years. Some passing memory of his former self caused him to pause there a moment, then he strolled on again heedlessly as before. The voice of his old manager was still calling after him: “Sam, you are to return here at any time that you see fit.” And the faintest echo of that same voice many years earlier: “Humph! well, you better stay on the floor. That’s the place for you, Sam; accustom yourself to the stock so you can find any book in the dark.” He smiled softly. He might show the old house a trick or two yet if Oliver would only get over that nonsense about unknown authors. Dead men were not going to write the literature of the future. Times were changing. The unknown were feeling the forces of these changes, perhaps, more than those famous authors who were resting on their oars. It was largely for this reason that he had quit the old house; they were too set, too conservative—but now if Smith was going to make an ass of himself merely because they had sustained a few losses——

He paused. Where was he? Why, at Mrs. Brady’s. His mood and his feet had taken him there, with twenty years’ habit behind to push him. It was merely an instinct to feel for his latch-key and let himself in, and cry out to the face that beamed upon him as she held the lamp and he ascended the stairs to his room: “Good evening, Mrs. Brady. Are you well to-night?” and to hear the usual answer: “Pretty, Mr. Sam. Lord bless you!”

But when Sam had reached his room and lit his

student lamp, his eyes roamed over the book-shelves and he found nothing to satisfy him. That stuff, too, was all dead; it didn't matter whether it were written two thousand years ago or two months ago. That particular combination of forces that called it forth, that gave it birth, was no more. His mind was in a thoroughly receptive state. He was out of the city; he was a transcendentalist, and he wanted something outré. So that for a quarter of an hour he continued to pace the floor, pausing anon before his book-shelves, drawing out a volume and fingering its pages, but only to end with a "Humph! I can't read that stuff to-night," and placing it back again. In very despair he stood at last before his desk, and in sheer thoughtlessness picked up his scissors and cut the cord that bound the manuscript he had deposited there. He was a mere automaton in the act, having undone packages of that nature in just that way so often as to be unconscious of the process.

The Desert Isle—he smiled. How enchanting the title at this particular moment! Surely, that was outré to the last degree. At any other time, perhaps, so arbitrary was the critic's mood in repressing the struggling but insistent genius of the age, that name would have damned it utterly and the manuscript would have flown to the—to the unavailable, in short order.

But now it was refreshing. Sam actually chuckled and smacked his lips as he settled back in his chair. That name was a complete surprise, an appetising cocktail to the feast he contemplated.

"Ah, it starts in well," he thought. "How replete is that first paragraph! At least it implies that the writer is no novice. She speaks in figures, not in a continuous and endless chain of dawdling, wandering words; and each figure, perfectly chosen,

suggests whole pages, volumes, dynasties. Aye, she knows the algebra of her art! And what a free and joyous style!"

By midnight the desert isle was wholly delightful. He had lost the power to analyze, and gave himself up to its enjoyment body and soul. Merely the story of Calyce and Evathlus over again—or of Sappho; but lambent of the author's personality. Yet somewhat there was that reminded him of another story which he had admired, and that had been a failure—*The Rhapsodist*. But again, not so very many years ago, one of this kind had come to us from Africa, and it—it had been a success! Why not again? Why not again—for they were as different as the sandy veld and grassy prairie?

And so, let come what might, the story was a success with him. He was both thrilled and satisfied; upon its conclusion, some time past two o'clock, he simply laid the manuscript in his lap, his head resting on the back of his chair, and dreamed the balance of the night of that marvelous desert isle that he had just discovered, and that ere morning was fairly colonised with sweet Calyces.

"Mr. Sam—oh, Mr. Sam! Ain't you coming to breakfast?"

Sam shook himself together, made his toilet, and by nine o'clock was traveling that same road he had gone over the night before towards Mrs. Phillips'. But this time he was positive—he wanted to see her. And he clutched the manuscript in his hand as though it were a bag of gold.

He rang the bell and waited in the hall.

"Oh, it is Mr. Kent. Won't you come in and sit down? You surprised me—I thought it was the doctor. You know Potiphar was quite ill last night—had the most horrible dreams. Now, what

would you do for him, if you were I?" She seemed distressed withal.

Sam meditated. His knowledge of medicine was limited. He had never heard of but one person in all his life who had ever tried taking anything for "horrible dreams," and then not with the happiest of results, perhaps. Still, it might be different with Potiphar.

"King Midas," he observed slowly, "drank bull's hot blood. You might urge it, Mrs. Phillips; at least he is your own husband and you may do whatever you please with him."

She gasped. "What do you mean?" Then the recollection of the tale came over her and she laughed despite herself, whilst he regarded her narrowly.

"That's real mean in you, Mr. Kent. Nay, it's brutal—if you knew how ill he was. What have you got in your hand?"

Sam looked to see. "Oh, I forgot—I want you to read it. No, I can't stop. Read it! Read it and bring it in when you come downtown. Good-by; I'm late this morning and in a hurry."

However, he arrived at the office in good season and without anyone being aware of the delay; for Oliver Goldsmith, in conformity with his last disgruntled threat, had not been seen at his desk for several days. He had stuck to his text religiously; staying at home, drinking nothing stronger than claret and tea, and keeping at work with an industry truly heroic on that love-story which he was bound should be merely light and frothy and on no account go below the surface. But on the fifth day his fears overwhelmed him—they hampered his style. What if that old idiot, Sam, were to accept a story by a strange author? Why, it would ruin him! It would sweep away in a second all that

money that his uncle had left him. He would have nothing left but the name—no, he was damned if he'd have that, either! But the money? His stories hadn't sold very well lately—he feared he was losing his grip. Still, it couldn't be that; it was simply the annoyance and burden of this publishing business that was spoiling him. But then, it would never do to give up now. He must fight to keep his money to the last breath.

Wherefore he hurried into hat and coat and was off downtown like a shot: he must keep a watch on Sam.

"Hello, old man. Nothing up, I suppose?"

Sam glanced up. "Oh, is that you, Oliver? No; everything's lovely."

Goldsmith gladdened.

"Ah, I'm devilish glad to hear *that*, Sam. But I say, now; I don't suppose you've heard anything yet from any of those celebrated authors, have you?"

Sam shuddered. Had Oliver been drinking? "You forget, Oliver, it's been less than a week since we sent off those letters."

"The devil! is it possible? It seems a month. Do you know, I believe I've been working too hard lately. I think I'll quit writing for awhile and go out more. What do you think?"

"Why, I don't think; nobody needs to think about that. Of course you ought to: it's what every author ought to do."

It was the second time Sam had been called on for medical advice that morning, and he had given it generously, in full accord with the truth that was in him.

"Well, I believe I'll begin, then, this very day," Oliver decided. "I'll swear off. I sha'n't open my desk, you know, but just loaf around town. If anything comes up all you need to do is to wait for me."

I'll drop in every hour or so and talk it over with you." He opened the door. "Down, there! Going down! I'll be back in a little while, old man." And he was off.

In this way he could best keep an eye on Sam, and Sam would never know it! After awhile they'd hear from *some author with a name*. Then everything would be all right.

And so it went on for that day, and for the sixth, and on the seventh Oliver had so far forgotten himself and regained his equanimity as to sit in his chair and put his feet on the desk. It was a business-like attitude; he liked it; and he could watch Sam work—and Sam could work better than any man he ever saw.

But in the very midst of these pleasant and optimistic reflections the door opened and some one came in with a package of manuscript in her hand. "What! another one?" Oliver took his feet down in a hurry and glared savagely. But no; it was only Mrs. Phillips. She bowed to him sweetly and smiled.

"Oh, Mr. Kent," she cried, hurrying straight to Sam's desk, "I cannot tell you the pleasure you have given me. It is the dearest little story I've read in many a day. It's absolutely unique; a perfect gem of its kind!"

"Wh-what's that? Who is it by?" gasped Smith in consternation.

"A new author, Oliver," Sam answered quietly; and to her: "I'm pleased to bear witness to your good taste, Mrs. Phillips. But I knew you'd enjoy it."

"Oh, yes, immensely. But can you get it out before the holidays, Mr. Goldsmith-Smith?"

"Oh, no, quite impossible," replied that gentleman hastily. "But who is it by? Why don't one of you

say who it's by?" And he came over to have a look at it.

"A Miss Nannette Nielsen is the author, Oliver."

Smith staggered. "What! that country girl? Oh, no, you don't mean it. Still, I presume you did enjoy it, Mrs. Phillips. It must have been very amusing. Yes, I can easily understand that," and he laughed, glancing from one to the other. But what in the devil did they mean by looking so serious over it? There wasn't going to be any funeral—no, sir, not on him!

"Oliver," said Sam solemnly, "you may take my word for it that this manuscript," and he thumped it three times with his fist, "is the work of a genius. It's the rarest thing of the year, and for many a year."

Oliver thrust his hands in his pockets, walked over to the window, and back again. Now, what did Sam mean by taking advantage of him like this before Mrs. Phillips? How could he express himself adequately whilst she stood there looking at him like that? It wasn't right; it was all a conspiracy. Anyway, he wasn't going to stand it.

"Really, Mrs. Phillips, I beg your pardon, you know; I don't question your judgment, nor Sam's. But we made it an invariable rule just the other day that we should accept no more stories from strange—from unknown authors. Isn't that so, Sam?"

"Ah, but that is so foolish, Mr. Goldsmith-Smith," she promptly repudiated. "Of course I don't want to interfere with your business, but you know literature doesn't go by rules. Does it, Mr. Kent?"

Smith parried, and lunged. "Not literature, perhaps, Mrs. Phillips. Yes, I grant you that. But it's business, I say—hard work; the investment of capital and the avoidance of risks. This certainly has to go by rules. Why, Sam knows that."

"But there isn't any risk," she retorted. "I've read it, and Mr. Kent has read it. All *you* have to do is to publish it. There's no risk; is there, Mr. Kent?"

Good Lord! was she serious? Did she want to ruin him? She was pushing him to the wall, and Sam stood there and said nothing!

"Is the author a—a friend of yours, Mrs. Phillips?" he queried cautiously.

"Oh, no; not at all. I know nothing of her. Only I do think it would be doing her a great wrong and injustice to refuse her manuscript. Besides, I believe you would be the one to regret it in the end—for, of course, there are other publishers."

"Why, of course there are, Mrs. Phillips," smiling at his chance. "I'll just tell you what I'll do, now," sitting at his desk and grasping his pen. "I'll give you a letter to some of them—to McBugle & Dunn, Sam's old firm, you know, telling them what a splendid story it is, and you can take it over to them."

"Who—I? But what have I to do with it, Mr. Goldsmith-Smith?" she laughed.

"Why, you're interested in it, aren't you? and you have influence and——"

"Nonsense, Oliver," Sam interposed. "Do you think McBugle & Dunn would look at a manuscript we had refused?"

"Yes; why not?—of course I do. You know very well they are not as capable of judging a story as—as we are, Sam. They would be glad of our opinion."

Sam was getting warm; began to walk the floor. "Perhaps, Oliver, if you had worked there as long as I had and seen the stuff come in, pile up, and be returned without ever being opened save to enclose an unavailable slip, you wouldn't be so confident. No, their reputation is made; their stand-

ing is assured. But for us—I tell you this is the chance of a lifetime. This manuscript must not be rejected!”

Smith was fairly stunned. Sam had never spoken to him like that before. He wished he could fire him on the spot. But he couldn't; if he did he would have to get another fireman for the *Sun*—and he didn't know where to find one, unfortunately.

“But now I'll tell you what we'll do, Oliver,” coaxed the insubordinate, “we'll just get out a small edition—say two thousand—of this manuscript, this *Desert Isle*, and if there's any loss you may charge it up to my salary. How does that strike you?”

Manifestly, it disconcerted him. He tried to smile, but succeeded only indifferently, felt that he had made a fool of himself. All his better nature came back to him—as better nature is fain to do whenever money is not involved. “Why, Sam, I—really, I beg your pardon a thousand times, you know. And I wouldn't have you think for the world, Mrs. Phillips, that I doubt your judgment, for I think more of your opinion than—than——”

“Than is good for you, perhaps.”

“Well, perhaps; but that's not your fault, you know. It's the public's. Anyway, you mustn't think I meant anything personal. Oh, no; not in the least. It's only this—this damnable publishing business! It worries the life out of me. It's not my element. But go ahead and publish it, Sam—and it sha'n't come out of your salary, either!”

An hour later, when quiet had been restored and the head of the O. G. Goldsmith-Smith Publishing Co. sat at his desk with his head down, poring over that mascot manuscript even as Sam had done a few nights ago, the door again opened, cautiously, silently, and a little figure flew in, all fragrant and frosty and sparkling, but oh! so dreadfully anxious. She

went right past Sam's desk, and was seated in that chair where the culprit is accustomed to sit whilst awaiting the verdict, almost before Oliver was aware of her presence.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Goldsmith-Smith. I—I've come to see if you have decided."

Goldsmith glanced at her; being still far away in the story, he appeared to look right through her. It was not auspicious, and her heart thumped cruelly.

"Ah, it's Miss Nielsen," he replied, and halted. "Well, my dear——"

"Oh, yes, sir," she consented swiftly.

"My dear Miss Nielsen," he continued mechanically, yet ominously. "You know that there are many, many risks involved in printing a story from a strange author. In fact, it's all an experiment."

"Oh, dear! is it always, sir?"

"Yes, always, Miss Nielsen; always." And again he paused. He could never forget that; although he was still so lost in the tale that he could not bring himself to consider the author.

Sam fidgeted in his chair. Why did he want to keep the poor young thing suffering like that!

"But after all, Miss Nielsen," Oliver continued, still looking through her, "your story has greatly pleased me and I have decided to publish it."

She bounded in the air like a ball. "Oh, you dear old thing, you!"

She had kissed him; her arms had been round his neck; her music had filled the room and she was out of the door like a bird.

Smith stood up, turned round, shook himself, and concluded he had read *that* in the story.

Sam wrote on. The following week his elegant little essay in the *Sun*, entitled "Tangents and Tyros," was greatly enjoyed.

CHAPTER X.

A RECEPTION AND A REMINISCENCE.

Despite his fears of Professor Lawrence's first principles, Kenneth persuaded him to take his class for one evening and prepared to go with Mabel and Nannette to Mrs. Adams' reception as promised. He had always enjoyed society, but since returning from abroad they had persistently refused all invitations, and until now the respect due his father's memory had sufficed to keep Mabel from murmuring at their enforced home-staying. But this winter, she had declared, was going to be gay; it was a law of nature that when people are young they should enjoy themselves; this world being chiefly remarkable for the dexterity with which people try to conform to natural law in the midst of an unnatural environment. With the century's improved facilities even Tantalus should be able to grasp something.

"The carriage is waiting, Mabel," her husband called, stepping from the hall as he adjusted his muffler and drew on his overcoat. "Are you girls nearly ready?"

"Yes, dear, in a minute," she answered, with voice suggestive of several pins still remaining in the mouth and which must first be mysteriously disposed somewhere ere the proper feeling of feminine safety could ensue.

He walked the floor slowly, into the library, turned over a book, repaced his way to the parlour, drummed a chord or two, whirled round on the piano-stool, looked out of the window, yet still that remarkable minute, which is adequately measured

only by a man's experience of such, crept on apace.

"Is it cold out, Kenneth?" Mabel asked in a voice a shade less pining than before. She wished he wouldn't be so impatient.

"Awfully, darling; twenty below, at least," he answered, shivering at the words and moving towards the radiator.

"Won't you please get my cape and hold it where it will get warm? I shall be ready in a minute."

"Certainly; I thought you had it." He hastened into the hall and up the stairs, two at a jump. "By Jove!" he added, on returning, unfolding the furs before the radiator, "I should think that poor devil of a coachman would freeze up."

"Only a minute more, dear, and I shall be ready. Have you got your coat on?"

"Yes, Mabel."

"Then won't you see, please, if my fan is in your pocket. I haven't seen it since that night we went to the theatre."

He dropped the cloak and felt hurriedly in both deep side-pockets. "Why, no," he called, "it's not here."

He heard Mabel say "Sh!" and Nannette giggled.

"Oh dear, then it must surely be upstairs. Won't you fetch it, please?"

"Upstairs?" he cried confusedly, wondering how it was that a woman could be so indefinite in her data.

"Well, I think it's in the drawer of the dressing table in the east room. Do hurry, Kenneth; I am waiting."

And again he flew up the stairs, into the east room, west room, north room, and opening nearly every drawer that he came to, but to no avail. "It is strange," he muttered, as he turned out the gas

from one room and prepared to cross the hall into another, "what in the deuce can have become of that fan!" And he lit the gas and again went through the drawers. Lord! but it was warm with that muffler and overcoat on. What was the use of his getting ready so soon, anyway? It was now past nine o'clock; he would have had time to attend to his class and reach home again before this. And he really felt a qualm as he thought of Professor Lawrence occupying his chair and telling his class that air and sunshine were unlimited in quantity, whilst the earth was limited. "A bureau drawer, it seems, is limited in size, but its capacity is unlimited." He laughed, resolving to ask his friend Lawrence about this deduction on sight. Still he rummaged, eagerly, hotly, enthusiasm unabated; a projecting shelf catching the crown of his high hat as he leaned over and sending it rolling across the floor. "When we cease to adapt ourselves to our environment," he was saying to himself. "Confound that fan, anyway!"

"Kenneth, Kenneth! are you never coming?" Mabel called from below.

"Why, yes, Mabel," he cried, picking up his hat, "but I can't find that miserable fan."

"Dear me, Kenneth, didn't you hear me say I'd found it?"

He came to the head of the stairs and looked down at her.

"Mabel, did you have that fan all the while?"

She laughed. "Nonsense! you know you are always so impatient, Kenneth. Come! we are late."

Mrs. Adams' reception that evening belonged to that species of entertainment which is politely known as a crush, the pressure being so bad that everyone looked hopelessly good natured, whilst giving rise to the impression that men and women, after all,

were highly socialised creatures and preferred standing shoulder to shoulder rather than remaining apart. That one man's hand was at every other man's throat, or that one woman's hand yearned to pull every other woman's hair was a fact that, at this particular time, no sane person would have cared to express; there being some ideas only fit for daylight and the counting-room, and which, howsoever true, one is not supposed to harbour and carry in one's head at a reception.

"Really, Professor Moore, I am so delighted," murmured a sweet little woman at his side, Mrs. Adams, to whom Mabel had just presented him, "that you have favoured us this evening. I believe you go out so little?"

He thanked her, plead excuses of various forms, and, Mabel and Nannette being held in conversation and utterly lost in a circling labyrinth fully three feet away, in reply to her threat to introduce him, he shouldered his way through the sea, the little woman following like a rudder in his wake, her hand on his sleeve.

"Let me see, do you know Mrs. Anthony?" she asked, as they stood a moment in an oasis near a bay window.

He shook his head hopelessly. "The nearest will do, Mrs. Adams."

She laughed. "No, she asked after you; we must find her. Ah, here she is now."

The person sought was sitting on a sofa, a gentleman at her side, whom Kenneth faintly remembered having somewhere seen before. The latter rose as Kenneth stood bowing before them. "I shall leave you with Mrs. Anthony," said his hostess, and vanished.

"Please sit beside me, Dr. Moore. The crowd and the standing tire me to death. Potiphar, won't

you try and find Enid?" And now the memory of the name and the face came back with a start as the gentleman bowed and withdrew.

"I see you don't remember me, Dr. Moore."

"Oh, yes. I beg your pardon," he protested recklessly.

"What, you do—or do you seek to flatter an old woman's vanity?" And she laughed in a manner that displayed the dimples and the ghost of a younger face. "Let me see, I haven't seen you since—no, no! it would be challenging old age to call up all those years. But I believe the last time I remember seeing you and your father was just before we moved away from the city."

"Yes, I remember," he answered thoughtfully, recognising her now.

"Do you, indeed? Ha, ha, ha!" Leaning slightly towards him and tapping his shoulder lightly with her fan, she continued: "And do you remember how you and Enid came into the house dripping from head to foot like two drowned rats, both her stockings dangling over her shoes, and plastered with mud from her face down, from having fallen into a hole?"

"Yes; I pulled her out," he admitted, reminiscently. "Did she never tell you?"

"Thanks! You might have left her. It would have saved me a great deal of trouble at the time—and, perhaps, afterwards." She sighed. "The girl leads her dear husband a perfectly awful chase—I may tell you this as an old friend. I feel so sorry for him sometimes, for I know what it is—I know what it is, I tell you. But what are you doing, Kenneth? Practising?"

"Not medicine," he answered. "I am in the university."

"Ah! you are teaching music?"

"No; political economy."

"Dear me! Whoever would have thought you'd have taken up such an old dead thing as that! You're an unnatural son, neither your father nor your mother's. But have you given up your music entirely? I remember that you used to play wonderfully."

He told her briefly of his work, his life, with, perhaps, a touch of the enthusiasm which he could never wholly obscure. "Tut! you will be training with those horrible anarchists next," she admonished. "What do you think is going to become of our country, anyway? Sometimes when I read the papers nowadays and catch a faint rumbling of all this smothered resentment and hatred, I declare, it fairly makes me feel that poor Hiram was a fool to spend all the energy of his life in getting money. You know he became interested in mines, Kenneth, when we moved out to Nevada. For twenty years we lived among those Indians and half-civilised wretches, save for an occasional trip east and across the ocean. But up to the very day of his death, over a year ago, he continued to be so wrapped up in getting money out of his mines that he lost all interest in everything else. Ah, how I used to long for the days when he was only a well-paid clerk and we were back in the city!"

"Enid must have enjoyed the free life, though, I should think."

"Enid! Dear me, no!" she exclaimed. "We scarcely saw the child after she was five years old. You see there were no schools in that country to suit us, so that for fifteen years Enid was never home save on a visit. And that accounts for it—her peculiarities, her indifference to the opinion of everybody. Whilst as for Potiphar—ah, me, poor Potiphar!"

Mrs. Anthony sighed, breathed herself, attempting to drive the incubus from her with her fan.

"Her husband, I believe?" Kenneth faltered, faintly conscious of some slight feeling of remonstrance while framing the sentence, but which he vaguely attributed to a certain animosity aroused by that gentleman's personal appearance.

"Why, yes; didn't I tell you he was my son-in-law? You see, it was this way: Mr. Phillips, Potiphar, is an expert in mining and corporation law; you know he is now local attorney for the Saviour Oil Co., and is doing splendidly. Well, he happened to be at our house during the holidays three years ago, called there on business, when Enid came home. It was sudden; she had got into another disgraceful scrape lately with some youngster that outraged the college and the proprieties and heaven knows what all; her father was so angry that he wouldn't speak to her for a week. You know he was always a horribly nervous man, poor dear soul! He seemed to have no power to put up with those little stabs and shocks that society inflicts even when we lived here in the city. So you can see how it was: Mr. Anthony, furious; Enid, haughty, independent, devilish; Potiphar—Mr. Phillips—with a love for complications and the girl, sympathetic, kind, two clients on his hands whose interests were essentially identical. Enid laughed at him at first, used to make fun of him shockingly; but there was no dude about him and——"

"I beg your pardon?" said Kenneth, slightly losing the drift.

"I said that Potiphar was no dude, of course; and therefore," she coughed, and caught her breath.

"Yes?"

"Why, she couldn't help but respect him."

"Oh, no; I suppose not," he apologised hastily.

"Well, that's all there was to it. Her father swore; Enid finally broke down, and Potiphar effected a compromise and married her. And for once, I tell you, I praised the Lord with all my soul." And she laughed, shrugged her shoulders like a general after a battle, and added: "Potiphar is such a reliable fellow, you know."

They continued to sit there, chatting confidentially for a space; she calling up old memories of his father which made him forgetful of the place and hour. She hadn't met Mabel; had heard of her, of her being a brilliant pianiste and a charming girl, quiet, perhaps, but ladylike and refined. She would make him such a *good* wife. Ah, she was so different from Enid! Still, she was very anxious for him to meet Enid, who often spoke of him. "You are her oldest memory, her first love," her eyes twinkled and the dimples deepened roguishly as she caught him blushing.

It was shameful; he was angry with himself for a feeling only half understood; wished she would stop talking in this inconsequential fashion, and yet—and yet—it strangely fascinated him. Pshaw! what was Enid to him? He had seen her once since her marriage, had touched her hand, seen himself in her eyes and not known her. Why should he be called upon to meet her again, now, at this late day, only to be reminded of some strange, mysterious force that hitherto had never entered into his philosophy, and with the occult working of which he did not care to encumber himself. For one suddenly to lose the points of the compass and behold the sun rising at the point where it is supposed to have set, is confusing, blinding, maddening. To walk in darkness or twilight is better than following an ignis-fatuus. Moreover, the impressions of an infant, a six year

old, are not supposed to torment and follow a man through life.

As Mabel now approached he made her take his seat beside Mrs. Anthony, bowed, and straightway plunged into the maze.

"Ah, professor," and a little man with gold spectacles and smiling face grasped his hand, "glad to see you out. It's a good change; I know you've been confining yourself very strictly." And Dr. Little's face expressed genuine anxiety, catholicity and courtly solicitude at one sitting.

Kenneth thanked him, explaining that he had found a substitute for that evening.

"Ah, yes," acceded the president, "Professor Lawrence is a very able man—remarkably able, in fact, but conservative. You know a university must always be conservative, Dr. Moore; it won't do to have such a time with our universities in this country as they have in Russia. No, it would never do in the world. Now, Professor Lawrence is eminently safe, you know; teaches on the old lines, Adam Smith and Malthus, although I believe he has some doubt over Mill and Ricardo, considering them somewhat revolutionary, untrustworthy, perhaps. But, of course, this is his conservative temperament. And, indeed, Dr. Moore, it is in fine contrast with your own; in fact, I congratulate myself every day that the university has two such good men in political economy who form such a perfect balance to each other—perfectly balanced, sir, perfectly balanced;" and Dr. Little waved his soft hand lightly to and fro in imitation of a wheel that, fortunately, will never be able to make a complete and dangerous revolution, but will go only so far and then swing back and try it over again *ad infinitum*. "But still," continued the president, "I have had in mind for some time to give you my personal thanks for the

splendid new life you have instilled into a department that hitherto has been shunned. Why, the classes have more than doubled, taking yours and Dr. Lawrence's together. Your youth, hope, optimism, even pantheism, perhaps, have accomplished wonders. But remember, my dear doctor, that truth is a vexed question. I pray you go out more; enjoy yourself; keep your mind always fresh."

Kenneth smiled, thanked him, promised to take care of his health, and moved on. Luxury, luxury! proud palace of art and delight, let not thy denizens be disturbed by wheels that turn over in the hapless head of some visionary professor! Be comforted; the poor ye have always with you. Bring forth your ancient prerogatives, sound the glad cymbals, drink, dance, play. Get rid of thy tub, Diogenes! Go into society! Eat good food and take exercise; for heaven's sake, take exercise! and if you be a priest take a vacation. Your position will always be waiting for you, and the salary will go on just the same. *Mens sana in corpore sano*. But let the reception go on.

Amid the crowd he met Potiphar. "You are not familiar with our company, professor, I believe. However, you'll soon make acquaintances. Now, that"—waving a soft, podgy hand in the direction of a row of very fat females in very low-necked gowns—"that is our particular galaxy of stars; in fact, you might even call it our milky-way."

He thought the fellow was coarse. Still, if such women would dress in that way he knew they deserved nothing better. And he passed on, wondering, dreaming; greeting an occasional friend here and there, but without seeming to be awakened yet to the life of the party. "Hello, Kenneth!" Ah, that was Goldsmith-Smith; and over there in the corner sat

Nannette listening to one of Sam Kent's marvelous yarns. But his meeting with Dr. Little had given him a curious shock; had made him aware, as did every recent conversation with that gentleman, of the great chasm that yawned eternally between them. It was the bottomless pit where he stood, yet already he despaired, nay, even hated the thought of ever standing on the peak of Parnassus of which that gentleman was alleged to have the pre-emption.

In the full glow of the light he was passing a darkened window-retreat, fragrant of secrecy, provocative of lover's vows, when he heard his name called, "Kenneth, Kenneth!" and a hand on the sleeve drew him in.

"Enid!" he cried.

"Of course. I have been dying to see you since you left me your card in the casino. I wanted to pay you back your napoleon," and she turned up a face, with lips that invited, openly.

Ere his heart had beat twice he had answered. She laughed. "That makes us quits, I suppose. Come in here. Have you met Professor Thurston?" and that gentleman rose from his seat in the window.

"Professor Thurston?" said Kenneth in consternation; "why——"

"Yes," Enid answered coolly. "Mr. Moore and I are old friends, Professor Thurston. You know I don't act that way with strangers."

Thurston was polite; he granted it. "I have met Dr. Moore," said he, taking his hand, "and am engaged to Mrs. Moore for the next waltz, so I shall leave you. Mind you don't do it again, though," and he laughed, passing out in the light.

"It's like getting acquainted with you all over," she began. "I scarcely know how to take you."

"You have various ways then, perhaps?" he suggested.

Her eyes flashed. "Now, that is surely unkind," she declared. "I assure you that was quite irregular, established a precedent, as Potiphar would say. But why didn't you make yourself known to me at Monte Carlo, and what made you run away directly I had read your name?"

He explained. The name she had handed him was but one of a thousand; it signified nothing until after he had received his mail from home.

"Your hair has grown dark," said he.

"Yes," she admitted, "an anomalous change nowadays, isn't it? Did you like it better light?"

Ah, what difference did his liking make? Still he looked to see—a long time.

"Yes, perhaps I did," he answered simply.

"You've seen my mother, I suppose," she went on, "and she has told you all that's interesting about me. And Potiphar?"

"I've not had the pleasure to speak with him much," he evaded.

"Oh, Potiphar doesn't talk—not unless he has a case," she returned. "But he's stable, substantial; you know right where to place your hands on him whenever you want him."

He smiled. "Obviously, God made him for a husband."

She searched his face quickly. "Kenneth, you have grown cynical. Why is it?"

"Indeed! I beg your pardon," he protested. "I did not mean it."

Afterwards he knew not how long they had sat there; the music floating in from the ball-room, couples scurrying past, dark eyes that lightened and went out, and the scent of the jasmine in her hair; whilst anon the tide of her fancy, sweeping the scene from his mind, carried him back once more to the casino. What paths had he travelled and loved;

and was Wagner a voice or a crash? She had studied vocal—in Paris; Bayreuth threw her into despair. No, she never expected to do anything—Potiphar didn't approve of it. Only at home, Gounod and Schumann and Rubinstein. He must come and see them, very often. "We shall always be friends, you know!" She gave him both hands, impulsively.

They passed into the card room. A couple was wanted to take the place of one leaving. Kenneth was given a card well covered with gold stars, and, to his surprise—for he was but a careless player—after playing a few hands he found himself one of five fated to cut for a prize.

"Cut last," Enid whispered, "and pick the top card."

The first cut a king; the second a nine-spot; the third a ten; the fourth cut an ace; and Kenneth, to the eyes that commanded, chose the top card and lo! 'twas likewise an ace.

The interest was intensified; the crowd deepened round the table, as the winners prepared to cut again; and the prize, a bottle-fly scarf-pin of emeralds and rubies, was brought forth.

"I told you," laughed Enid, clutching his sleeve as the cards were being shuffled. "Be modest; let him cut first; then take the top card."

His rival found a king; held it up, smiling.

Again Kenneth turned over the first card, and again found an ace. "What witchcraft is in it?" he cried, as everyone laughed at his confusion, his rival's disappointment, and Enid clapping her hands.

"You must be a homeopath, Dr. Moore," said a lady at his side who, knowing the capacious maw of the medical profession for that title to the exclusion of all other comers, assumed him to be a physician.

"Madam," returned the defeated, who happened

to be an irascible representative of the blue pill, "do you base your deduction on his success, or the evident ostentation of his methods?"

"Hush!" and a lady placed her hand on his sleeve. "You must really forgive him, Mrs. Simmons," she apologised, "the doctor gets so wrought up over the game he is not aware what he says."

"Homeopaths are so successful," simpered Mrs. Simmons, confusedly, failing to note that she had been the cause of the doctor's warmth.

"Yes, madam," answered he of the old school; "it's excellent in games of chance! Come, Mary, let's go home."

"Gambling shows character, don't you think?" said Enid, as she fastened the pin in his lapel.

"I had a friend once, Dr. Moore," still persisted Mrs. Simmons, "who had a perfect system at Monte Carlo."

"He broke the bank, possibly," Kenneth answered politely, though bored to his heels and anxious to be gone.

"No, he didn't break the bank exactly," she answered innocently, "but he would have done so if his money had only lasted."

The music struck up in the ball-room, the rhythmic swing of the years in its memorial measures. "The last waltz," said Enid. "Oh dear! I am engaged."

"Irrevocably?" he asked, as they moved towards the ball-room.

She stopped, looked full in his face. Ah, where found she those eyes? They were not American, nor quite Japanese; but French, perhaps, sometime of Scotland—the beacon of Bothwell and Rizzio.

"I'll beg an excuse," she said; and as they came to the door: "One moment!"

Ah, how he loved the scene! Despise it as he

would in his brain, speak of it harshly, scornfully, almost with hatred at times as he thought of the blank, starved, mutinous faces without, perhaps peering in through the pane; the injustice, inequality, the deep Dead Sea of despair, with its murmur and shriek of waves breaking shoreward—no, even this could not quite silence his joy and heart-hunger for present happiness. It was part of him, parcel of his being. And as Enid again stood before him, radiant, lovely, loving and arch, all the clouds swept aside as he clasped her, with the trick of the years and the law.

On their way homeward Mabel observed: "You seemed to enjoy dancing this evening, Kenneth."

He started. "Did I? You know it has been a long time—since we went anywhere."

"Yes; I know."

CHAPTER XI.

A PROFOUND PROBLEM.

Mrs. Mason was crocheting; she was likewise talking; and Mr. Mason was reading the evening newspaper. It was, in fact, a condition of truce, of compromise, though words of tremendous significance were doubtless being spoken. But, though Mr. Mason occupied his customary position of unconditional surrender and held the white flag appealingly in front of his eyes, he could not prevent a stray bullet in the form of direct examination hitting him in the ear ever and anon, and causing him to enter an objection on the ground of its being incompetent, irrelevant, and immaterial.

The court silently waived the objection, and Mrs. Mason resumed her argument.

"I wonder if the paper has anything to say to-night about the goings-on down at Wheeling? It's perfectly outrageous the way the people there are being stirred up. You see, it all happened this way: Kenneth has a friend down there, a physician; Holden his name is—Dr. Holden, of course; and I think he was studying abroad at the same time Kenneth was. He is said to have been very successful, too, especially in fevers. Mrs. Simmons sent for him once to come away up here to see her; and you know she's a homeopath, too, and knows all about medicine; in fact, she has her own medicine-case and gives pulsatilla and chamomile and all those powerful drugs to her children just like a doctor. So I'm sure that Dr. Holden must be an unusually good physician if he could please her, and he has a great hold on the people. But perhaps you have heard of him, Edward?"

The newspaper rustled negatively.

"Well, I don't suppose," she continued. "Of course men don't have the time to keep track of all these things that are working around us to undermine society; they can't, they are too busy. It's just all a man can do nowadays to work hard all day long and support his family decently; and of course charity begins at home. I declare I don't see for the life of me how young men are going to get started at all after awhile, with all these department stores and trusts and corporations competing against them. It seems to me that the best thing a young man can do is to just get a job when he's fourteen and stay right with it! It doesn't pay to go to college and learn Latin and then become a street-car conductor. Still, it's better to do that than to be stirring up the people the way Kenneth is doing down there at Wheeling. There's no sense in that sort o' thing, and if Dr. Moore were living I don't believe he'd

allow his son to act so; although he used to have some very queer notions himself, don't you think so, Edward?"

"Notions? Oh, yes; there's another of those special sales," he assured her, turning a page. "It takes a full page, too."

"Where is it, Edward?" she asked, quickly.

"Really, Helen, I don't know—Isaacstein's or Moses, Jones and Co. You may have the paper after awhile."

"Oh, don't hurry, Edward," she protested, "don't hurry. Of course I can see it in the morning and go in on the train with you. For you know there's no end of things we've just got to have and I've been waiting a whole week for these special sales to begin. I declare, I don't see what the people would do without these department stores, and there's no sense in all this outlandish talk of the business-men's association trying to close them up. Isn't this a free country, I should like to know? and if some people aren't smart enough and bright enough to keep up with the procession and become department stores themselves, why, then, let 'em close their doors and go out of business. Still, it seems pretty hard, I suppose, after a man has been in business all his life and attended strictly to it without drinking or gambling or doing anything bad, to be compelled to close his doors and sell his stock out for almost nothing and go to work as a common clerk again in one of those big stores. But, then, there's usually some cause for it, Edward; it may be hard to discover at first, but you'll generally find that he has been drinking or gambling or running after some woman who wasn't his wife! Oh, yes, you'll nearly always find that's the way it goes." And she paused a moment, lost in the magnificent perspective of what a city we might have when men quit doing these things, so

that every one of them could be the proud owner of a store as big as his neighbour's—every man his own bank president, his own railway king, his own owner of a million acres of land, just as soon as he quit drinking and smoking and doing other naughty things that produce his present damnable economic environment.

"But as I was saying, Edward, you know Kenneth was asked by this friend of his, Dr. Holden, to go to Wheeling and organise a class in his particular specialty—I never can think of that word, but you know what I mean, of course. You see, they had been having lots of trouble down there about one thing and another, and this Dr. Holden had been right in the thick of it. If I remember rightly it was water that made the first trouble——"

"Humph! I didn't know water ever made trouble—thought you just said it was always whiskey?" And Edward paused a moment to listen to this remarkable circumstance, instance of a new force driving men to desperation.

She looked up, surprised into confusion. "Well, of course, Edward, that's what our minister always says—that drink is at the bottom of all this social inequality. Still, he may have meant to include water?" Mrs. Mason still clutched after a possible straw.

"Undoubtedly," assured her husband; "if he would include food, too, he might perhaps hit the mark. But go on."

"Well," she continued, "it's a prohibition town, you know, Wheeling is; where they make all those elegant cars. Mr. Wheeling built the whole town and owns all the buildings and houses and streets and sidewalks——"

"And water?"

"Yes; he bought the water from the city and sold

it to the workmen living in his own town for a handsome profit. But the people didn't like it——”

“What, the water?”

“No, the profit. Of course, Edward, they were foolish and wrong and making an awful fuss about a little matter, for I don't suppose the profit amounted to more than a dollar on each workman for the whole month. But, anyway, the people got all excited over it and appealed to Dr. Holden, and he persuaded Kenneth to go down there and start a class. And now what do you suppose the outcome of it all is?”

“Don't know, I'm sure.”

“Why, the people there begin to think that they own the town and the entire car works! Think of it, Edward, after Mr. Wheeling and others have invested so much capital there!”

Mr. Mason chuckled, picked up his paper, then laid it aside again as he thought of the consternation King George and others must have felt when told by Jefferson, Franklin, Henry and other demagogues that they, the royalists, no longer owned this country even if they had invested their capital here, but that it belonged to the people.

“Well, Helen, it proves that the world moves, after all,” said he. “It is cruelly, wickedly slow in its movements, but the impulse is never quite lost. God bless him! let the boy go on with his classes.”

“Well, I declare!” But there was a note of finality in the paper's rustle and Mrs. Mason gasped twice and subsided.

Yet for the past half dozen years, as every one knew, the trouble had been gathering at Wheeling. In the first years of its existence the town was famous the world over as a model town, being undoubtedly planned and outlined on the noblest and broadest principles known to its founder and chief

owner. Schools, library, and other public buildings were erected and completely equipped, whilst street after street was laid out, fronted with red brick houses which were leased to the workmen at a moderate price. The first years were prosperous; whence the owners did not see fit to devote their time to the translation of dreams and parables. If any had heard of Pharaoh's dream of the seven lean kine that ate up the seven fat—well, such was only a myth, and we were not living in Egypt, but the United States! They stored not their produce in granaries, but watered their stock freely and stuck the proceeds in their pockets. Then came their Nemesis in the vain endeavour to earn interest on two shares of stock for only one rightfully represented. Obviously, there was but one way to do it—namely, cut wages. Accordingly they were reduced. Rents, however, remained the same, and it being fortunately a prohibition town, there was no fear of anyone going to the devil by drinking whiskey. Water rates, therefore, were secure. And now the pound of flesh was about to be peeled. The Doones were secure in their glen, and there was a general and wholesome feeling on the part of the inhabitants of Exmoor that they couldn't live without robbers anyway. They had always had the Doones, and feared some terrible calamity if they raised their impious hands against those who were all lords and gentlemen by birth. A fat heifer now and then, a wife, a daughter, a son shot dead at the door, the loss of all these could be borne because such was the will of Providence!

In the midst of this commotion Kenneth had organised a class at Wheeling for the purpose of teaching the outlines of economics; for it was amazing, astounding for him to find how little in general the public knew of his subject—nay, even the word was

unknown. With algebra, geometry and many branches of proverbial uselessness the very children of the poor were stuffed to the point of idiocy; the binomial theorem and nebular hypothesis fed and consumed their grey matter; any one of them was capable of finding the locus of a point in space equidistant from three given points not in a straight line; but anything as simple as A, B, C which directly concerned their economic intelligence and was invaluable in fitting them for usefulness as citizens of a republic, was neither to be thought of nor taught. In a monarchy, the professor reflected, there might be sufficient reason for putting all studies under the ban which tend to dispute the fact of the divinity of kings; to the Roman superstition science had been a stab in the heart; but why, under a republic whose government is the people, these fundamental principles which go to insure its continuance, should pass untaught, unhonoured, aye, even dishonoured, was beyond Kenneth's power to fathom. Was it dry; was it uninteresting; was it infamous? On every hand public discussion obtained, and that of the freest, upon religion, morality, ethics; through fiction alone one could delve to the very heart of Christianity. But economics, it seemed, was a thing merely to fight and quarrel over, and hide out of sight with a shudder. Here knowledge was expected to be intuitive, and not to come through study.

"Mabel," he called from the library, "would you mind sending this note for me over to Mr. Ludington? I'm off to Wheeling again this evening."

"You wish him to go with you, Kenneth?" she asked, slowly, her tones implying her disapproval.

He assured her, "Wouldn't you and Nannette like to go, too?"

"Oh, no; nonsense, Kenneth! I should be out of

place. Besides, you know how I feel about those people."

"Oh, but I should, professor," cried Nannette; "I should love to."

"Good! I don't see why, Mabel," he returned. "You would be surprised to see how the people turn out and how intently they listen and remember every word. At first, you know, hardly anyone came; mostly school children, boys and girls who were glad of an excuse to get together of an evening even if it was only a lecture. But they grew interested in the quiz, went home and told their parents, provoked discussion, and now everyone comes."

And such indeed was the fact; for this evening, in spite of the stormy weather without, causing Mr. Ludington to send regrets, the little hall where he lectured was well filled—workingmen, their wives and their families; neatly dressed, but showing the signs of wear; a pinched face here and there, eyes hungry and over large that followed his every move; hands that showed years of toil; the producers of wealth and plutocracy and naught of their own to show for it. They had come to learn how it happened.

"Tom, will you please give us John Stuart Mill's definition of the essentials for production?" he asked, beginning the quiz.

The man replied, firmly: "Two, professor. First, Labour; second, Natural Resources."

Of the truth of this definition, both in Mill's time and all time, there had never been any doubt in the mind of the class until one evening when Professor Lawrence substituted for Kenneth and threw the entire class into confusion by declaring that there were three essentials for the production of wealth—namely: First, Labour; second, Natural Resources, and, third, Capital.

"How did Professor Lawrence explain that?" asked Kenneth, with a smile.

"Well, sir," answered a young man, "he said that no matter how rich the soil, how luxuriant the grass, how fine the climate, how plentiful the iron, the coal and the manifold resources of Nature, wealth cannot be produced unless human labour performs its part."

"Exactly; but what about Capital?"

"Well, sir, he said that when we pass from the most primitive age of society, it is found that labour cannot be properly employed without capital."

Kenneth looked surprised; the idea seemed so absurd, so fraught with the monstrous motive behind it.

"I beg your pardon, professor," added Tom, "but I took the liberty to ask him if we were to assume then that the thing which ailed India, Ireland, and even our coal-miners, was due to lack of capital on the part of the employers. I remembered what you told us of India, sir, from having seen the country, and asked him if he thought the people there would all continue to starve to death in that fertile country if every capitalistic Englishman would take his capital and go home and die."

Kenneth laughed. "And what did he say?"

"Oh, he said my questions were foreign to the subject."

The lecturer continued: "I believe that is a question which every one of you is competent now to decide for yourself. Moreover, I will add that authority is all on your side, and none whatever in support of Professor Lawrence. You should remember, too, that wherever capital is the most abundant, there wages are always the lowest. Private capital is a gigantic sponge, the thief of labour, not its support. For instance, all through the West

and in California at a time when there practically was no capital, wages were high, and so, too, in our own city, the reason for this is obvious and requires little thought. But let us have Adam Smith's definition of wages? Mike, will you give it?"

"Yis, sor," answered the Hibernian, grinning all over with pleasure. "'The produce of labour constitutes natural recompense, or wages of labour.' And begorra! whin the gintleman said the produce of labour he meant the full produce, not half av it, or wan quarther."

"You're right, Mike; there's not the least doubt of it," Kenneth assured him. "Labour, then, applied to natural resources, produces natural recompense or wages." And he continued speaking and showing how, under the present capitalistic system, labour gets only one-quarter of its full product, the balance accruing to the capitalist and unnecessary go-betweens in the shape of profits.

Surely, these matters were simple enough; even the children understood the truth and significance of every word uttered. As a test of mental ability to grasp a problem and give its ultimate solution these propositions were a mere plaything for the mind. Yet not a soul there had ever heard of the like in school. They had, many of them, even been through the high schools, and a few, college; yet they had all come out into life as helpless to grasp a proposition in simple economics until now as the veriest babe in the woods; turned adrift into republican society, with the fullest franchise of manhood, merely to find themselves the helpless prey of the ward-heeler and bum politician at the very first election; knowing nothing of the basic economic principles which are induced from the broad domain of ethics and biology, not to mention early Chris-

tianity, and which must continue to be the very tap-root of our tree, the life-blood of our republic, lest we would drift with scarcely a pause or excuse into the wide-open arms of a pilfering plutocracy. "Good God!" he had urged, "it is bewildering, maddening! Other countries have some excuse; they make no vain boasts of equality of opportunity and republican principles. But we? we have business schools to teach legalised stealing; law schools to teach the superiority of law over justice; Sunday schools to teach mythology; but to teach the principles contained in our Declaration of Independence, we have nothing! nothing! nothing! save God and the heavens above us."

He turned to the children, who had fallen into the habit of expecting a question or two during the quiz. "Johnny," said he, picking out a bright-faced youngster of about the age of fourteen, "what is the cause of poverty, according to the church?"

"Ignorance, improvidence, drunkenness," answered the boy readily, "and because God cursed the earth."

"Well, what do you think of this doctrine?"

"I think the church lies, sir," said the boy.

"Humph! possibly it does," the professor conceded. "Now then, Johnny, you have just learned that the labourer does not get the full product of his labour wherever industry is conducted for the profits of the few instead of the good of the many—that, in fact, he only receives about one-quarter of his full product, whilst three-quarters are lost to him in the shape of interest and profits."

"Yes, sir," assented the boy.

"Well, then, just suppose that I am a capitalist, and that I own all the flour and all the apples and propose to start up the paralyzed industries of this country by going into the manufacture of apple tarts,

Therefore I engage you and all the other boys whom I find starving and anxious to work for me, and agree to give you regular wages in the shape of one-quarter of a tart for every tart you make. What would be the inevitable result?"

"Why, sir, pretty soon you would have a great pile of tarts and we should have none."

"What! none? you ignorant, improvident, drunken children! What have you done with all your tarts?"

"We had to eat them, sir, as we went along," answered Johnnie.

"Pshaw! didn't I have to eat my tarts, too?"

"Some of them, sir; but you can't eat any more tarts than I can, and you know it, sir," Johnnie maintained stoutly.

The professor admitted it, looking at the boy's loose and hungry jacket. "But," he continued, "suppose I should tell you now that I didn't want any more tarts, and that you must all stop work. What excuse would I offer?"

"You would say, sir, that there was an overproduction, or else lack of confidence," answered the boy in disgust.

"But couldn't I sell my pile of tarts and then go on with the work again?"

"No, sir," answered the boy, "because all workmen are in the same boat as we are. Men who make shoes are robbed in the same way and have no more money to buy tarts than we have to buy shoes."

"If you please, professor," said his friend, Dr. Holden, stepping forward, "I should like to demonstrate for a moment the benighted ignorance or chicanery displayed by a reputable magazine on this question to which the children have just replied. This," he proceeded, holding up the magazine, "is

a copy of the *Christian Argus*, containing a criticism on a certain new book." Whereupon he read: "The author explains periods of depression by the fact that the labourer gets but half of his product, and therefore cannot create (buy back) a demand for all he produces. Very true is this conclusion; but if the labourer gets but half his product, the capitalist gets the other half and the capitalist's expenditures create as great a demand for products as the labourers.'

"Now, what a specious argument is this!" continued Holden, indignantly. "For clearly to admit that the capitalist *does* get the other half of every labourer's product, but that he expends it himself for commodities, is a lie on the face of it. Else wealth would never pile up so that to-day nine per cent of our people own forty-five billions of the nation's entire wealth of sixty-two billions. Now, is any magazine so foolish as to fancy it possible for Mr. Rockland to consume his daily income of fifty thousand dollars for commodities even if he chose? Why, he can eat no more apple tarts than Johnnie! If it were possible for our millionaires to do this, of course we should not witness so frequently what is falsely called overproduction; if the capitalists who owned the water tank could only have drunk more buckets of water the tank would never have overflowed. But it's a lying impossibility, and the editor of this Christian magazine must know it!"

Over this question of the effects of the profit system, a system in which, for every dollar the labourer created seventy-five cents was filched from him—according to the lecturer—and with the sanction of church and society, the discussion continued awhile. Afterward, when the meeting adjourned, the professor made Nannette acquainted with some of the people, among them Holden and his wife.

"Is this Dr. Holden the same that the papers were full of a short time ago, professor?" Nannette asked, curiously, as they were on the way home.

"Yes, and his wife. Her father, Mr. James Dana, is one of the principal owners in the car works. How did you like her?"

"Oh, I thought she was charming. I don't blame her husband for running away with her. Still, I should think it might be a trifle unpleasant to hear her father referred to by her husband as a robber. Don't you think so?"

"Naturally," he replied; "you see, money divides people even worse than religion. Her marriage was bitterly opposed. However, Dr. Holden meant nothing personal in his remarks; what he condemns is the whole unfortunate system, not the individual."

For a space she said nothing as they rode on in the night; then, finally: "Really, professor, I'm ashamed to acknowledge it, but the little that I've heard to-night has come as a revelation to me. Do you know, I've never actually thought before of the causes that created these great inequalities in society, and never so much as dreamed that the solution was a mere matter of arithmetic as simple as A, B, C. Only, why is it, if these things are so simple, that the people do not act?"

The professor smiled. "Because, my dear, whilst those things we spoke of to-night may now seem obvious enough to you, to the majority this is still the 'profound social problem.' Why, there are hundreds of public men, judges on the bench, even, who know less of economics than those children there to-night. Moreover, few men of wealth and influence are honest enough to consider the question fairly. For myself, in all my observation, and after fairly searching the literature of the world, I have failed to find one single refutation of the malevo-

lent part played in our economic life by the maintenance of Rent, Interest, and Profits. Christ knew it and condemned it. The whole system is a lie, a relic of monarchy that none can adequately defend; and none but a fool or a knave ever tries it. And the poverty that I see, and the suffering! Oh, it is maddening to behold these things and know the cause! Were I so ignorant or vicious as to accept it all as something designed by God, and so calmly repeat, 'the poor ye have always with you,' in harmony with the good people who go to church, then of course I could forget it—could regard poverty as inevitable. Modern Christianity is such a comfortable sop, you know; it has a never-failing excuse for every evil under the sun. Obviously, that's what it is for. The church is no longer at war with conventional evil, but is one with it."

CHAPTER XII.

REPRESENTATIVE PEOPLE.

To Mabel's persistent disappointment, the evenings continued to come and go that winter without their seeing very much of society; and, though she protested frequently and valiantly, it was of no use; her husband continually seemed to have some other matter on hand that he fancied was of greater importance. To be sure, Nannette's coming had enlivened their household considerably; her novel, true to Mr. Kent's judgment, had made a hit, and the author was now riding the top wave of local popularity. Consequently she was not lacking for friends; invitations poured in upon them, causing

that young woman to clap her hands and cry innocently: "Oh, isn't it just perfectly jolly!" Whereto the professor agreed, courteously, though for his part he preferred the quieter evenings at home, with music and a few friends.

"We have an invitation for to-morrow evening, Kenneth. You will go with us, of course?"

They were seated at dinner; dessert had been served; and at such a time if ever, thought Mabel, a man might forget his political-economy.

"I'm awfully sorry, Mabel; but, really, I can't go. I wish you would ask Smith or Mr. Kent."

Mabel flushed; this had become his usual answer. "Dear me, Kenneth! How provoking and mean you can be," she cried. "You never even wait to ask who it is."

"But, Mabel," he began, "if it were the queen of Sheba——"

Nannette giggled. "No, it's some other charming Egyptian. Guess again."

"In fact, it's from Mrs. Phillips, Mrs. Potiphar Phillips, I believe," Mabel urged, with sarcasm. "Does this make no difference with your refusal?"

"Ah, did she call?" he evaded. He knew—no, he felt—that Mabel did not like her. "I'm sorry I wasn't at home," he added recklessly.

"I've no doubt," Mabel laughed. "You would, of course, have accepted immediately her invitation to dinner. Really, I never saw you so bewitched with anyone in my life!"

He looked up suddenly. "What in the world do you mean, Mabel?"

"Pshaw! if you hadn't been so innocent you wouldn't have been so attracted by her. You know she is fast, and a flirt, and paints dreadfully! Why, there was paint on the lapel of your coat, and you danced with no one but her."

Nannette opened her eyes very wide, but said nothing.

"Nonsense!" he protested; "I declare it was that old lady Simmons. You know her. She was so fascinated with me that she fairly kept her head on my shoulder all the time I sat at cards. What a nuisance that old lady is!"

Mabel only laughed, incredulously, somewhat unpleasantly.

"Neither have I ever heard that Mrs. Phillips paints, flirts, or is fast," he continued, "and I've known her for over twenty years."

"Twenty years? You never told me!"

"I didn't think it necessary. You met Mrs. Anthony; I supposed she told everything." Mabel shook her head; Mrs. Anthony had spoken only of his father, she explained; besides she had only sat beside her a moment. "But I wish you and Mrs. Phillips might be friends, Mabel," he urged frankly, without pausing to analyze the desire. "I think you would find her interesting. You've met her, Nannette?"

"Yes; she has been very kind to me. I think she is lovely."

"But they are awfully wealthy, Kenneth," Mabel pursued; "I couldn't be very intimate with her, anyway—unless you quit teaching school and go into business. Still, I don't like her; she is one of those women men seek—favoured and favouring."

Whereupon he battled for her; declared the charge was fallacious, invidious, founded in old-maidish myopia. Potiphar's wife was unquestionably better than her reporters—as was invariably the case. "Her life has been different from yours, Mabel; less restrained, perhaps, that is all."

At any rate he contrived to accept the invitation for the following evening, which accordingly found

them composing part of a little company of men and women such as are commonly styled representative people. Potiphar sat at the head of the table; filled it, graced it, ornamented it; his face beaming broadly, flushed with the labour of hospitality. Moreover he was the sort of man that invariably looks well in such a position. In fact there was a tradition—which others called a joke—to the effect that he had once been mistaken at a reception for the butler; wherefore he had ever afterwards evinced a strong desire to be seated as much of the time as consistent when out at social gatherings, which was but natural, and creditable to his *amour propre*. A gentleman can't be supposed to be tagged and labelled in order to disarm the suspicion of his fellows; he should be inferred, deduced, divined!

The conversation fell upon immortal topics; the horse-show, the theatre, and the latest and grandest reception that had stirred up so much discussion all over the country. The sentiment was practically unanimous; they were all a wonderful benefit, a blessing in disguise to the poor. Kenneth listened, patiently, satirically, oddly amused; the time had long since ceased for him to be either astounded or amazed; the point was to accept it sweetly, good-humouredly. "The ingratitude of the poor," he observed, "is surely becoming a thing to cause our universal disgust."

"Yes," replied Potiphar, piling a plate that was passed, "of course they are not capable of understanding such matters. Yet it is a fact that the woman who, as she believes, under the impulse of vanity orders a new garment, is contributing largely to the increase of commodities throughout the world, and consequently is helping the poor."

There was a familiar twang to the words, Ken-

neth thought, reminding him forcibly of the speech attributed to a certain orator of the gold-democrat party; and again, of reading only the night before that a well-known gambler had said that the various gambling houses of the city—aside from the board-of-trade—gave employment to twenty-five hundred men at wages ranging from two to ten dollars per day. This also must help the poor, he had thought.

“And whenever I refill and empty my glass,” added Enid, “some poor fellow should feel well-fed and well-drunk, vicariously, and hence should be gloriously grateful towards me. Political-economy is certainly very comforting; don’t you think so, Mr. Priestly?”

Mr. Priestly hesitated, coloured slightly. As their pastor, he hated to express the first dissenting note, to strike the first discord and see himself literally the skeleton at the feast. He attempted, therefore, to dodge as gracefully as possible behind what has been the bulwark of the church for the past thousand years, and replied: “Of course it is ignorance, improvidence and drunkenness which are at the bottom of the people’s poverty.” But beholding part of his body exposed after this declaration, knowing in fact that it was not a bullet-proof coat and that he was likely to receive a fatal shot from Professor Moore, who sat opposite, smiling and saying little, he added hastily—

“Of course, Mrs. Phillips, there is another side to this question; there are always two sides to a question,” and he turned over the breast of a young chicken on his plate, one side of which was bare, the other covered with meat. “Now there is our bishop, you know, who says in these words—and indeed they are his words; I am in no manner responsible for them—h’m! if I recall them correctly, he says:

'The amiable sophistry that luxury and extravagance put money in circulation and so promote a beneficent expenditure, becomes, in the face of our modern civilization with its complex and tremendous social problems, simply a monstrous impertinence.' "

Murmurs of tremendous disapproval arose; knives and forks were suspended, remained stationary; signs of some terrible social upheaval. "But of course," added Mr. Priestly, confusedly, looking appealingly at Kenneth, who merely laughed in return, "those are not my words, ladies and gentlemen!" And he inwardly cursed a memory that had the power of retaining such anarchic utterances, and the young face opposite, with its honest, forceful eyes, that had driven him into repeating such for his own protection. No; improvidence, ignorance, and drunkenness were good enough for him in the future; let this be a lesson to him!

Mr. Frederick Worth, one of the editorial writers on the *Republican*, muttered something abrupt about "blatant bishops who ought to be in jail." He couldn't see for the life of him what the country was coming to, if men whom we had a right to suppose had common-sense continued to talk in that way and incited the people to discontent and rebellion. "It's outrageous," he avowed, "that such profound questions should to-day be agitating the mind of every Tom, Dick and Harry; it requires a great mind to grasp and master them." Mr. Worth had begun life as a printer's devil, and had risen steadily to reporting and editorial writing. The only economist he had ever read was Malthus. Obviously he was the person to guide and teach the general public.

The bishop was thereupon quickly damned, bur-

ied, and his obituary editorial written with much gusto and flourish of trumpets by Mr. Worth, who admitted that he was possibly a great man but had laboured all his life under a huge mistake; a sincere soul, but narrow, visionary, causing us to deeply deplore the fact that a Creator who had manifestly endowed him with so much strength and earnestness should yet have seen fit to allow His servant to go so far astray from the beaten paths, dwelling in bogs, sleeping in pitfalls, subsisting simply on Dead Sea fruit. Whilst Mr. Priestly breathed a silent prayer over the remains, and the conversation again returned to its legitimate and God-given purpose of entertainment.

"Will you come and play an accompaniment, Kenneth, after awhile?" Enid asked, as the women rose to pass out, leaving the men over their wine and cigars.

He shook his head. "Mabel is the pianiste, you know."

"Oh, that's too bad. All that's fairest you've forsaken."

He laughed. But again he felt that music was ceasing to interest him. In the pressure of other work calling for emotional activity music had ceased to be a force. It was too aimless, too indeterminate, even too soulless. And though he never himself had analyzed it, one saw it was merely the cry of the heart of humanity that held him, the surging minor chord with its haunting melody that came welling up from the past, sounding the key to the present, and echoing down the future till it was one again with the harmonies of the spheres. The eternal rhythm of life sang forever in his ears; Wagner, Berlioz, Beethoven knew it, had given it voice and expression; but as for him, no; his mission, though none the less holy,

was not to speak in sounds. In Germany, perhaps, he might have been a musician, but the environment of an industrial Western city had laid hands upon him, and being thrilled and inspired with the fact that all careers which make for truth are essentially one and the same, he felt amply satisfied with his choice.

"What course is the law going to take with those tramps in the West, Mr. Phillips?" asked the ubiquitous Worth. "I presume you read that account of their capturing a train?"

"Oh, yes," puffed Potiphar; "they are on their way to Washington," and he laughed. "They propose to capture in its lair the beast that has so long been strangling them."

"But surely, Mr. Phillips, there must be some law to make them disperse," urged Mr. Priestly, anxiously. "Won't somebody get out a—an injunction?"

"Oh, I suppose so," Potiphar answered carelessly; "but what's the use? Let them take a trip and see the country."

"For my part," again spoke Mr. Worth seriously, "I believe with Dr. Priestly that measures should be immediately taken to disperse them. The whole movement and organisation of these tramps, these 'Commonwealers' is a threat to overthrow our government and society. This excuse of theirs that they seek work is all poppy-cock! Don't you think so, professor?"

He had feared it was coming; feared it, that is, because he disliked an argument of this kind when he knew beforehand that it was not a desire to get at the truth, a request for information that the company wanted, but merely a chance to air its notions, its prejudices, to shoot at the mark with himself for a target. He was familiar with the ex-

perience, having once had an affair of this sort to a finish with his Aunt Helen, wherein that tribulation of talkativeness had literally mopped the floor with him. "I tell you, I just did speak my whole mind out for once, Edward," she explained to her husband afterwards; which caused that gentleman to sigh and congratulate himself inordinately on his escape, whilst sensible at the same time of an infinite pity for Kenneth; for his wife had never spoken her "whole mind" to him at one sitting, but had doled it out to him gradually in accordance with the state of his health.

"No, gentlemen," Kenneth answered quietly, "I confess that I do not see it in that light. To me this movement is but a sign, a hand on the dial, which our governing class would do well to note. Men do not do these things for fun, nor for the sake of caricaturing themselves in the magazines and newspapers. On the contrary, is it not, rather, a sad commentary on civilization to be thus shown again that any and all reforms, in this or any other age, have always arisen from the pinching poverty and grinding slavery of the proletarian which causes him to rebel, rather than from the noble and generous initiative of the wealthy and powerful?"

"But surely, professor," protested Mr. Worth with a deprecatory laugh, "you do not take this thing seriously, do you? You have no idea that these men really want work?"

He hesitated. "My opinion," he answered modestly, "is of no moment in a matter of this kind—or at most it is merely my opinion. I presume that no one present has lately experienced the trial of searching for a job and not finding it. Still, one knows without trying it that if he were to throw himself in front of a freight-train it would probably crush him. Less than twenty-five years ago we

practically had no unemployed in this country; to-day we have over a million. Under such conditions, a hundred men waiting for every available position, what chance has a man searching for a job?"

Mr. Priestly murmured, yes; he knew the conditions were very sad, very distressful. Still, he never liked to quote figures; they tended to excite and inflame the listener, and we should, of course, be particularly cautious in speaking of such things out loud, above a whisper, in fact, for it would never do to permit the masses to feel that we understood the justice of their claims, as it would likely stir up violence against us for procrastinating. He was thankful, however, for Professor Moore's speaking of it so plainly in their presence where, he felt sure, it need occasion no violence, no alarm.

"You feel satisfied, professor, I suppose," asked Potiphar deliberately, "of the accuracy of your figures?"

"Personally, no;" he answered. "I believe they are too low; the number of unemployed is nearer to four million than to one."

Mr. Worth said nothing. Privately, he believed both Priestly and Moore to be anarchists in disguise, wholly discreditable, and that "there was no man in the whole damned country really out of a job who wanted one." Giant visionists! addlepated demagogues! men with trolleys in their heads that would set fire to the very lake! As for him, he had never had any trouble in getting a job. Still, he might be more valuable than other men. He at least would admit that—it was only fair!

"It is of course a peculiar condition," the professor continued; an anomaly, but none the less inevitable. You see, machinery has played its re-

lentless rôle with our workingmen; with every new year more men have been displaced by new machinery than can expect to find employment in new industries. Moreover, we read every morning of the organization of some new trust. Why, it is an age of trusts, and every one of them acts merely as a giant labour-saving machine. Now, these things are not a curse in themselves, but should be a blessing; and when society finally opens its eyes and decides to operate these trusts for its own benefit, all our evils will vanish and we shall thank God for the tendencies that created them."

The table gasped and caught its breath, all the way from Potiphar to the editorial writer. It was a most astounding scheme of robbery and spoliation of the rich for the benefit of the beggars, the fleecing of the divine few for the compensation of the scripturally condemned many. There seemed to be no one present who agreed with him or who had ever heard of such a monstrous piece of iniquity before, except Mr. Kent. But that gentleman said nothing, nor did Kenneth blame him. He knew how Kent felt; knew the basis of his unique position as a critic, and that when Kent spoke at all on such subjects it was merely in parables which left the public free to accept or decline as it chose—as its ignorance dictated. Moreover, the more Mr. Kent had gone into society, the more reason he had found for wearing always that admired and admirable garb of the devil which we term negation. In private, they often laughed over it and agreed; but in public, when the current was turned on flashing and sputtering, the positive pole must expect no help from the negative.

But the subject was not pursued. For, though Kenneth was an enthusiast, he was as yet no fanatic; a lover, not a hater, of society; and enough

had already been said to warn him. His subject was hated, that was obvious; time and again he had proved that gentlemen would have none of it, it was only the poor who drank it in great thirsty gulps. Well, he would let his enthusiasm flow in some other channel; society generally warmed towards him when he was as other men. Why should he be supposed to defend the truth whenever and wherever?

They passed into the drawing-room, where Enid immediately took him to task for not having called. "Aren't we going to be friends?" she asked. "You never come to see us, and we never meet you out anywhere."

Some one was singing in the parlour adjoining, Mabel accompanying him at the piano; a tenor voice and one of rare sweetness.

She continued: "Potiphar says you are butting your brains out against corporations?"

He made no answer. They had strolled into the music-room and stood in front of the pipe-organ. "Ah, do you play, Enid?" he asked.

She shook her head. "Oh, a little, but I've given up music lately. I think I prefer books. Let us sit here. Don't you?"

"No, not if I were you," he sighed; "books are the instrument of the devil; they cause people to think, and thinking breeds discontent, thence strife, rebellion, revolution."

She smiled. "Indeed! I'm glad to hear you confess it." And picking up a little book from a stand at her side, she asked: "Are you fond of Renan?"

He glanced at her. At least Mabel was mistaken about that point! Let her heart be what it might, there was no guile on those cheeks or the blushing rose of her lips.

He waved his hand lightly, in satirical protest.

"No, not particularly," he replied. "What is it?" He might have been fond of Machiavelli at such a moment.

She turned the leaves hastily. "Oh, I think he is delightful. This is 'The Story of My Youth.' You know there is one place here that made me think of you, Kenneth."

"Dear me!"

"Yes. Don't be so sarcastic! You know it was after that uprising in 1848. He was disappointed. Don't you want to hear what he says?"

"Go on."

The music had ceased, and she read from the page, in low tones—

"'As I had a well-balanced mind I saw that the ideal and the reality have nothing in common; that the world is, at all events for the time, given over to what is commonplace and paltry; that the cause which generous souls will embrace is sure to be the losing one; that the affairs of the world were never so well managed as when the idealists had no part or lot in them. Therefore I accustomed myself to follow a very singular course; that is, to shape my practical judgments in direct opposition to my theoretical judgments, and to regard as possible that which was in contradiction to my desires. A somewhat lengthy course had shown me that the cause I sympathized with always failed, and that the one which I decried was certain to be triumphant. The falser a political solution was, the brighter appeared to me its prospect of being accepted into the world of realities. I was taught the high value of evil, and that the cynical disavowal of all sentiment, generosity, and chivalry gave pleasure to the world at large and is invariably successful.'"

She placed the book aside, sitting with hands clasped over one knee.

Turning round on the organ-seat, he struck the keys; the profound but groping chords of the Tannhäuser overture marched majestically forth.

"Oh, those words are contemptible! contemptible!" pausing with sudden indignation. "I am surprised, overwhelmed with their pessimism in the face of our splendid progress. Are those words really Renan's?"

Enid smiled. She loved enthusiasm, going hand in hand with youth and sound health. "Of course; there is the book," she answered. "And when prophets disagree whom shall we trust?"

"But Enid, you forget; you do not consider!" he protested. "Nor did I know that you were interested, particularly——"

"Oh, in a literary way," she admitted indolently, "how can the most careless of creatures avoid the subject nowadays?" Still, she was sane, was no missionary; in fact, she had once sent her ship to Africa; and she laughed at him mischievously over the remembrance.

"Yes, yes," he protested, "but you must remember that mortals, after all, are merely mortals. The stress of life finally becomes so severe, so enormous as to sunder the very heartstrings. Prophets have their days of gloom and despair along with the least—and the Greatest—of men. Christ's cry on the cross: 'My God, why hast thou forsaken me!' No, we must take the man's life in its totality. Renan fought a great battle. Does not that battlefield still give the lie to the despairing words you quoted?"

Ere she could find words to reply the piano again preluded, with Nannette's violin obligato, and a richer voice blended with the tenor's. The song

they had chosen was that saddest of all sweet things, wonderful creation of those two men, poet and priest alike, Charles Kingsley and Charles Gounod: "O that we two were maying, down the stream of the soft spring breeze." Like a prayer it rose, sweet and solemn, the rhythmic roll of its ocean flooding and ebbing, and breaking with the crescendo upon the sands, far stretching and silent, but retreating with the hopeless weight of earth over all, whilst the dying breath and despairing cry of Christ was in its cadence.

"Oh that we two were sleeping,
In our nest in the churchyard sod,
With our limbs at rest, on the quiet earth's breast,
And our souls at home with God."

"Ah, had he known it, too?" Kenneth murmured softly; "dear old pugilistic Parson Lot?"

She made no answer, and he proceeded. "You should know, though, that this reform movement is no longer based on sentiment, thank heaven! but arithmetic."

"How do you mean, please?" she asked, seeing that she had lost to him after all.

"Why, in this manner. All this opposition on the part of the wealthy towards the demands of the labourer arises from the veriest ignorance of the principles of addition and subtraction in economics. The rich men claim that two and two make eight, or that one from five leaves seven. Furthermore, he gets violent and acts like a child if you seek to teach him arithmetic, saying that it is a profound subject and that he is not capable of mastering it; insomuch that to-day the average farmer in Kansas knows more of finance than the average banker in Wall street," he went on to explain, briefly.

She was surprised; knowing naught, as she acknowledged, of this mathematical side of the movement. "I thought it was merely because man hated to see his brother starve. And you don't go 'slumming,' either?" she asked.

No, he did not go "slumming;" doubting, in fact, whether there would ever be a great intellectual movement along that line.

"Still, it was great fun, you know," she persisted. "You have no idea how horribly tired one gets before the winter is over with these dinners, dances, concerts and theatres! But a slumming party, and a big policeman"—she launched into an amusing description of that popular pastime. "It makes one feel like a Christian," she added.

"Yes, I can understand that," he conceded sarcastically: "the chief glory and delight of a Christian—either individual or nation—consists in witnessing others less fortunately situated than himself. Then he can speak, in sooth, of Christianity and progress going hand in hand! It is extremely unctuous."

She looked up at him swiftly. "Aren't you growing bitter, Kenneth?"

"No—I don't know. Anyway, I hate frauds!"

"You always did, unfortunately. I think, though, it is temperamental—when one is like that. Others are fully as cognizant of fraud, perhaps, as you are; yet they pass on and say nothing. And so I can't help wishing, often—do you mind?—that you had not gone into this. There were other paths for you."

It was tempered with a smile.

He stirred uneasily. "Thank you. I did not know you ever thought of it. It is very—very thoughtless in you to do so, I'm sure."

She frowned, her hand resting on his knee. "You

are unkind. Why can you not be reasonable? If you knew what I have heard!"

"I can imagine it," he answered. "I am an anarchist, of course, seeking to overthrow perfect society. What a pretty ring that is!" He touched one of the gems on her fingers.

"Do you like it?" She rose, wearily. "It was a prize."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, I won it; I played my ace, unconsciously, on a ten-spot. Come; let us go and find Potiphar."

He rose; she took his arm. "Don't you think," he asked, half laughing, "that you are a little perverse?"

CHAPTER XIII.

A WINTER AFTERNOON.

A change had come over Mr. Goldsmith-Smith, and not of a fine subtlety, but obvious to everyone. The habit of his organism had become strangely milder, less erratic and more methodical; forces that erstwhile passed wholly imperceptible to him were now playing upon his plastic and embryonic extremities; hence if now and then he was surprising his friends with the fruits of his literary labour, such was nothing to the way he was astounding himself at every turn.

Much of this arose, unquestionably, from the remarkable sale of his firm's first successful publication, *The Desert Isle*. There may have been other incentives, but this fact had at least lent hope to his heart, point to his business rapier. No longer did he come lounging into the office at a late hour in the week, with a "Hello, Sam! Have you heard from——," mentioning some famous female au-

thor, and with vivid hallucinations of gold tumbling into the office from the sun and the moon and the far-off misty stars. No; his desk was always found open and himself hard at work before it by eight o'clock every morning—Sundays not excepted. A few responses had come, to be sure, from some illustrious litterateurs, respectfully asking what ransom he could afford to pay for an unborn manuscript. Whereto he had deigned no reply; circumstances had changed since the time when Sam had written those letters.

His own pen, moreover, had acquired of late a pith and flavour altogether unknown to his former style. Only this morning he had drawn a manuscript out of his overcoat pocket and thrown it on Sam's desk with a "Give it the devil, old man, and hand it back." But when Sam had complied and returned it to him late in the afternoon, there were no traces of his sulphurous majesty nor even his associate sign of the cross along the clean white margin.

"Oliver," said he sincerely—the "old man" speaking, of course, not the "old boy"—"Oliver, that's the best piece of work you've ever done. It's almost good enough to print." Which was high praise for Sam. "Hard work agrees with you; a love story, of course, but in a wonderfully broader strain."

Oliver's face flushed. It was the first criticism he had ever enjoyed, ever valued—and he himself was conscious of the change.

"Yes," he confessed; "I believe it is hard work that does it, Sam. It stirs the passions, you know. That reminds me, I have discovered a misplaced word on the two-hundred-and-thirteenth-page of Miss Nielsen's book. Did you know of it?"

Obviously, Oliver was becoming a close reader.

"Oh yes," Sam answered coolly. "I was intending to tell her our new edition would have a new plate."

"Oh, no, Sam, you needn't trouble about it. I was going to tell her myself."

"No trouble, I assure you, Oliver; I'm going to call this afternoon."

"This afternoon?" he cried. "Why, I was starting there this very moment."

"Very well," Sam agreed, closing his desk with a snap. "I'll ride with you in just a second."

Five minutes later this publishing house might have been seen walking down the street, wholly absorbed in a little business call it was about to make relative to a minute change in one of its publications. All of which is but a trifling little incident, perhaps, yet proving beyond peradventure that infinite regard for detail and incomparable courtesy for which young men in the publishing business are so commonly celebrated and esteemed.

"I wonder what the professor has done with his manuscript, Oliver. Did you ever hear him say?"

"No. I hope he's burned it, for the sake of his reputation."

"Nonsense! It should have been published; only we were not in a position to do so."

"Of course not," Oliver assented positively. "Anyway, I think he's making an ass of himself."

Sam evaded the issue. "Do you know," he asked thoughtfully, "how it was he came to marry his cousin?"

Oliver removed his cigar. "By Jove! You do have such a faculty, Sam, for turning things upside down. No, I never heard how he came to marry his cousin, but I've often wondered how his cousin came to marry him."

"Oh."

"Yes; she is a very accomplished girl. As for

Moore—well, he's not balanced right, you know. And he's such a confounded prig!"

"What do you mean by a prig, Oliver?"

"Oh, one of those fellows who are eternally trying to tell the world something."

Sam chuckled. "Jesus Christ must have been an awful prig—when one thinks of it."

It was a short walk to the old Moore house. When they entered, Mabel was practising a vocal exercise in the parlour, and Nannette was copying a manuscript on the typewriter for the professor. "Let it go, Nannette," he called; "I'm in no hurry, you know."

"Oh, no, professor, I'm nearly through," rattling away. "I'm sure you'll excuse me just a minute, won't you, Mr. Kent?" she continued, as Sam took a seat by her side.

"Oh, certainly. May I talk, or must I keep still?"

"No, please talk," she urged. "You see, I don't have to think."

"When I talk?"

"No, of course; when I write."

"Ah, I should suppose it would be a great comfort not to think when one writes," he suggested. "Now I speak of it, I have in mind several other authors whose work indicates their use. But didn't you have to think once or twice when writing *The Desert Isle*?"

She laughed. "Oh, no; I thought first, you see; then I just rattled it off. However, I'm not responsible for this stuff. This is the professor's. I don't know whether there's any thought in it or not. Professor," she called, "Mr. Kent wants to know if a person has to think when he writes this sort of thing?"

Kenneth laughed. "He ought to know that

without asking. It's only political-economy, Mr. Kent, and neither the writer nor the reader is supposed to waste any time in thinking over it. It only concerns the bread and butter of the many, whereas if it were some fairy tale or something on ecclesiastical superstition mankind might in general be supposed to consider it; go mad over it."

Smith shuddered. He hoped they weren't going to talk about *that*. "Did you read that story in the Christmas number of *Black's Monthly*, Mrs. Moore?" he asked.

No, Mabel had not read it, sad to confess; whereupon Smith began telling the plot in detail: A young man, out of work, sits in kitchen, face buried in his hands; in the parlour his wife lies dead; out on the back porch a couple of half-starved children of his seek amusement. Disgusted with this unendurable state of things, in desperation, unable to pay his rent, the young man resolves to see his landlord, who is a millionaire living up the Hudson. But on getting there he is ordered off the premises as a tramp. Going towards the river, he opportunely rescues the millionaire's little girl from drowning, and at the imminent risk of his own life; whilst the next moment he is picked up by the millionaire, who chances to be passing in his palatial yacht.

Smith recited it in full, affirming it to be one of the best short stories of the season.

"In short," said Sam, "Oliver has a genuine love for the millionaire in the guise of the fairy god-mother."

"Stuff! what idiotic trash!" cried Nannette, who had listened rhapsodically, "why, it is even worse than Cinderella! Surely you are not in earnest, Mr. Goldsmith-Smith?"

The latter insisted, asseverating that there was

nothing new in literature, simply old characters in new clothes. "If it reminds you of Cinderella, Miss Nielsen, it merely proves its genuineness, its universality."

An argument resulted immediately, with some heat, tempered anon with laughter as they reached some *reductio ad absurdum*; wherein the professor took no part, merely listening, pensively, wondering how long Goldsmith-Smith and the balance of the world would continue to take delight in such literature; how long we, who presumptuously style ourselves the educated classes, should continue to laugh at children and servant girls for finding pleasure in a form of literature that is at least no more flagrant and intolerable than our own society novel and magazine refuse.*

In the midst of it all the door-bell rang, and Dr. and Mrs. Holden entered. "Good! You are just in time, doctor," Kenneth cried; "we are in dispute over the most venerable character in fiction, the strongest passion that shadows humanity—the fairy god-mother and her disguises."

"Superstition—is that what you mean?"

Oliver objected, strenuously, but at length conceded the point. "Well, you may call it superstition, if you like. What I maintain is that it pays best, is most universal, surest to catch the general public, whether one be author, publisher——"

"Or preacher," his host interposed.

Smith staggered. "Of course; preacher, or—or anybody else!"

The laugh that followed proved, so far as pay was concerned, that Oliver had silenced all opponents.

*"My own opinion has long been, that for New World service our ideas of beauty—inherited from the Greeks, and so on to Shakespeare—need to be radically changed, and made anew for to-day's purposes and finer standards."—Whitman.

"Superstition always pays best," Holden agreed; "it is deep-rooted, older even than humanity."

Mabel rose. "Won't you come and play something, Kenneth?" she asked.

"Oh, after awhile. Please let us smoke and talk for a minute. Ask Nannette to play for you."

And, uninterrupted by the sounds from the adjoining room, the men continued to sit there, following up the subject of superstition, conservatism, and their biologic foundation; the difficulty of throwing off an old habit of thought. Even in the world of inanimate things one beholds the same story; for example, we take a piece of polished steel, place a wafer on it, now breathe on it and throw the wafer aside. Then put the steel away for a day or a year, breathe on it, and lo! the spectral image of the wafer returns again and again with every breath.

Even so the impression of the individual becomes that of the race, the nation. With every change in the wind this spectral image appears, warning us, haunting us, commanding us after it is dead. We call it superstition.

Alas! when should we get rid of the thing; when should the damned spot be wiped out? How long would the pestiferous Past continue to snap at our heels and feudal fools cry out "Backward! backward!" when we would go forward? When would the Law of the Present come to be considered as holy, as worshipful, and as beautiful, as our superstition?

When?

Perchance when Friday falls on Monday; when thirteen tolls no more than ten; when ghosts agree to sleep at night and walk at noon!

"I presume you have noticed, professor," Kent remarked, "that my old firm, McBugle & Dunn,

have just brought out a new college text-book on economics. Have you seen it?"

Kenneth sighed. "What a pity! The world would be infinitely better off if nothing had ever been written on that subject, especially to-day when all our college text-books, impelled by the malevolent force behind them, are trying to inculcate principles so false that the veriest tyro can prick them full of holes. For instance, there's my colleague, Professor Lawrence. You know he has recently written that the sole object of labour to-day is for the sake of the saving of capital. Surely, here is the truth with a vengeance! The great mass of people suppose that the object of labour is to gain a subsistence. This, manifestly, was God's intention; but behold how the capitalists and Professor Lawrence have turned the tables on the Deity!"

Sam smiled, puffing a cloudy halo about his face. "I made a mistake last Sunday," he confessed, "and went to church—the richest church in this city, too. It was very interesting; the preacher began by stating that one of the most unanswerable proofs of the blessings of Christianity was contained in our great and glorious banking-system. Most of his listeners were bankers, I inferred. 'Two thousand years ago,' said he, 'when a man wanted to take care of his money he dug a hole and buried it in the ground; but to-day Christianity has given the people confidence, so that we can now trust our money to one another, with interest.' Ha, ha! Pretty rich, wasn't it?"

"Yes, it certainly beats the devil," said Holden, joining in the laugh; "the nerve that some of those preachers show to-day. Why, I doubt if one out of a hundred ever heard the tale of Christ's driving the money-lenders out of the temple. However, it must

be very comforting for our bankers to have such a convenient preacher in their employ."

"Tut! Don't blame the hired-man. Poor devil! he must speak as he is bidden—in the direction of his bread and butter."

"Oh, of course. Still, it is none the pleasanter for that."

Silence followed, only broken by the rustling of the paper as Kent turned the pages of a magazine lying on the desk at his side.

"Is everything quiet at Wheeling, doctor?" asked Kenneth quietly.

Holden nodded. "On the surface, at least. The car company still refuses to reduce its rents or water rates."

"And the reduction of wages continues?"

"Yes; I don't see how they live, most of them. I know they are utterly unable to pay for medical service."

"Um! Should think Mr. Wheeling would be coming home soon and try to settle matters. Don't suppose you've heard, have you?"

"No; he's still travelling in Europe," the doctor answered; "however, for the peace of my own family, if nothing else, I wish he'd hurry up. Mr. Dana now has full charge, you know; he is down to Wheeling every day; sometimes he comes to our house for lunch, but generally he refuses. He thinks I'm an anarchist confirmed; everyone is an anarchist who combats his selfish interests. But it distresses Julia."

Kent glanced up from his magazine. "Have you read this?" he asked, indicating the article. "It's entitled 'The Causes of Poverty.'"

The professor nodded. "Oh, yes; that's another of those comfortable sugar-coated pills for the

wealthy to swallow. I swear, Mr. Kent, I formerly felt that when a man wrote in that style it was because he was ignorant and therefore not responsible; but now I believe such authors are mostly knaves or downright hirelings."

Kent looked for the author's name. "Yes, I thought I knew his style," he admitted.

"Of course, there's nothing new in it. You saw he began by making sport of Cardinal Gibbons' idea that we must always have poverty because of the alleged declaration by Christ, 'The poor ye have always with you;' and hence these great social inequalities, which were designed by God in order that the rich might learn to cultivate those higher qualities of charity and benevolence. The author confesses, however, that this view of the cardinal's seems rather superficial to him, accordingly we should infer a somewhat profounder grasp of the subject on his part. But no, quite the contrary; after a very pessimistic strain of a page or two, he sums up, I remember, by giving us the following causes of poverty: 1st. Because it is written in the Scriptures that God cursed the earth and bade it be unfruitful. 2d. Machinery (the inventive faculty of man is a curse!). 3d. The great social and industrial law, made sacred by Scripture, that unto every one that hath shall be given, whilst from him who hath nothing even that little which he hath shall be taken. 4th. Improvidence, ignorance, drunkenness. There you have it all in a nutshell. Is it not outrageous that any reputable magazine should print such rot in this age! They have the cheek to call us reformers pessimists; but these fools who resort to the Scriptures and tell us at every turn that we and the whole world are cursed—why, they are optimists! They own their magazines and newspapers and churches by the thou-

sand, and if tyranny and oppression ever need an excuse for themselves all they have to do is to point to the Scriptures. That settles it!"

He had forgotten his satire for the moment, and spoke with warmth and earnestness. The almost daily appearance of knavish and flimsy excuses for poverty, based on the Bible, such as were advanced in our leading magazines and papers was beginning to sting him. He could see no longer any reason for a man of average intelligence being unable to understand a simple proposition in economics such as children of twelve were able to solve; no reason but one, at least—and that the worst. So long as all industry was conducted for the sake of interest and profits, just so long, he maintained, would the helpless and innocent producers continue to be robbed, fleeced, for the benefit of the few. To be told in this age and generation that God had cursed the earth, and to allege it as an excuse for famine and starvation in Ireland or India with the well-known facts of English landlordism in full view, or in this monopoly-ridden land of ours, was enough to make a man's blood boil. Quite as much, even, as to be told by a Roman Catholic cardinal that we must continue to have poor people in order to *stimulate* the benevolent faculties of the rich!

"Someone," observed Kent, "ought to send the cardinal a marked copy of Jerome's comical little story of Lady Bountiful. That good lady, you remember, was very desirous of renting a home in a certain suburb of London, but found to her infinite dismay that there were no poor people there. The renting agent, however, agreed to fix that all right, and accordingly imported several poor families to fill her order. But the next difficulty was that the town had no regular drunkard. Dear

Lady Bountiful could never stand that; so a man was finally hired to come and live there, who agreed to get drunk at least three times a week. He made a great fuss over it at first, poor devil! but with a fine regard to his duty in stimulating the benevolent habits of the community he stuck to it heroically—some even swore that the old fellow actually enjoyed it after awhile. Oh, yes——”

But the laugh interrupted him; the tale was apt, and curiously fresh to the others, suggestive of innumerable mirth-compelling situations.

“God knows,” said Kenneth, “what our unfortunate rich people would do if it weren’t for the drunkards and paupers to stimulate them!”

“For my part,” Kent continued, “I long ago made up my mind that organised Christianity and Democracy are absolutely incompatible—dead arms around a vital being’s neck. Every law of growth and development is in direct opposition to any institutional thing like the church; we behold the proof of it in noting that wherever the human race has made an advance it has had first to get rid of some stupid tenet of alleged Christianity. Oh, yes; it is all right for a monarchy; part and parcel of it, in fact. But for a republic such as ours, I believe it to be the most dangerous and blinding superstition that threatens our progress.”

The room was growing dark as Holden rose to take his leave. “No, no, Henry,” Kenneth protested, “you are all to stay to dinner. It’s not often we— Hello!”

A burst of music sounded in from the street, the whistle of flute or piccolo.

“Oh, professor,” a voice called, breathless, from the adjoining room, “it’s that same old fellow, you know. Can’t we ask him in?”

"Oh, no, I shouldn't, Nannette," Mabel objected; "you never can tell where they come from."

"Nonsense! what do we care about that!" her husband retorted. "Go on, Nannette; fetch him in." And peering through the window, he added: "Ah, I have seen him before." It was the same old fellow he had heard fiddling the *Marseillaise* on that memorable excursion with the Reverend Mr. Griggs.

"It's old Pedro—Spanish Pete, they call him. Everyone knows him," Smith explained. "The last time I saw him, though, was in the police court—arrested for being a receiver of stolen goods."

"Dear me, Kenneth," began Mabel, "you see——"

"Hush!"

An old man, patched, white-locked and whiskered, and not overclean, stood in the doorway, fife and hat in either hand, and though plainly disturbed by this irregular departure from all the rules and conventions of his craft, yet was he not too embarrassed to greet his waiting audience with a bow that was oddly pathetic in its unexpected grace and courtly elegance. Kenneth hastened to offer him a chair. But no, the old man knew his part: had been invited for the sole sake of playing. Well, he would teach them something they had never dreamt of or imagined—that music did not dwell in conventional parlours, mounted upon mahogany stools and upholstered chairs; neither contained in the instrument, but within the performer.

Merely a cheap tin fife for his instrument, such as sells everywhere for a nickel. He placed the mouth-piece between his lips, and after a soft but wailing prelude like the wind in winter branches, struck boldly and shrilly into an Hungarian dance movement in E flat. His audience gazed at one

another in mute surprise; they had waited good-naturedly, expecting to hear some impossible variations on more or less popular airs of the day. On the contrary, the skill of the performer held them spellbound from the very first note; for not only did he produce with artistic assurance all the usual tones and half-tones, but also those infinite lesser gradations and sonorous shifts which one is accustomed to hear only in the musical mystery of strings.

A sudden ring at the door-bell failed to interrupt, passing unheeded, save by Mabel, who answered it.

"Why, it's Doctor Little!" she exclaimed, with a little cry of dismay as she started back. "Y—yes, my husband is home."

"Thank you; I'll trouble him just a—" He stepped in. "Ah, you are holding a soiree; you didn't tell me." Glancing swiftly into the parlour his eyes grew big with astonishment, then twinkled mischievously.

"Certainly, a most democratic gathering," he affirmed, with amusement.

The dance had ceased; instantly some one suggested the ballet music from Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, the professor accompanying him at the piano. It was irresistible; the whistling laughter and sparkle had created a mimic stage. Even the good Dr. Little was tripped off his feet and into the sitting-room, *diddle-diddle-de-diddle-de-diddle-de*, to the tune of that vivacious quickstep that has since found its curious renaissance in the motif of "Johnny Get Your Gun." The intermezzo fetched an encore, and again; whilst Nannette solicited contributions in Smith's silk hat and at the close presented piper with hat and contents.

"*Gracias, senorita,*" he bowed, and was for leaving, when Kenneth struck up a college song. At

once the old man improvised a rippling obligato, the while all voices joined in and *Lauriger Horatius* echoed through the house. Amid the cheers and applause at the close, the piper dodged through the door and was gone, heedless, perhaps, of the "Come again!" that followed him.

Dr. Little wiped his glasses and cleared his voice. "Yes, I declare, professor, you are surely on the right track. O dear me, yes! If we could only bring the classes together; wipe out this absurd upper-class rule and intolerance, and instil somewhat more of the spirit of liberty, equality, fraternity. Aye, therein lies the way—and the hope—of humanity. Now that old man, how much he showed us in his music, of that other life, its joys and shadows, of which we know next to nothing. His must be a very fine character, I should say."

So he chatted awhile, and in vein the freest; Kenneth had seldom seen him so open. "The joy of life!" he remarked to him in a word aside, his hand on the young man's shoulder. "I see, even your home breathes a different atmosphere. Ah, no wonder your students find your lectures fresh and original—bursting with life. However, I must be going; I shall surely miss my train. Good-by; good-by!" And to Mabel "You must really send me an invitation another time, Mrs. Moore."

At dinner, some one spoke of the president's manner—his cordiality, sympathetic tolerance. Many were surprised, having heard of him otherwise; but as for Kenneth, he merely remembered, vaguely, that Dr. Little was a Christian of the old type, but trusted that he might prove honest, after all.

CHAPTER XIV.

ALL A FORGERY.

It was one of those late mornings in mid-January; Potiphar's wife sat at breakfast alone with her mother; her husband of the sun-glorious name had not yet risen; had, in fact, attended a banquet the night before, where, as she read in the morning's paper, "his words, fraught with the profoundest philosophy, were drunk with every testimonial of approval by the host of practical, influential gentlemen who heard him." Something else besides words were drunk, possibly—practical and influential gentlemen do sometimes have a taste for other than liquid syllables or profound philosophy. At any rate, Potiphar was late to breakfast. In sooth, he frequently confessed at this hour to an incompatibility in his name, to its inappropriateness; this man who, we are informed in Holy Writ, was "a captain in the king's guard," but whose father nevertheless had been only a peregrinating Methodist preacher down in Ohio who made a specialty of hell and confessed to the fathership of twelve lusty children; Potiphar being the eldest and born at sunrise, whence the name.

"I understand the *Republican* has got a new editor," Mrs. Anthony remarked. "I read an account of him in last night's paper."

"Yes. Contemptible, wasn't it?" Enid answered, without looking up.

"Who—the new editor?"

"Of course. Didn't you read what he said in that interview?" The new editor, it appeared, was a man who had hitherto posed as a reformer, who

had for years been fighting against those innumerable plutocratic schemes advocated and initiated by the *Republican*. He had been working on an obscure New York paper. In the interview in question he had stated, frankly, that when the *Republican* offered him a better salary he just dropped his principles, seized his grip and came on; that a man's first duty belonged to the employer who would pay him the most.

"And you call that contemptible, Enid?"

"Certainly, mamma; don't you?"

Mrs. Anthony didn't know; she seemed vaguely to remember some statement in the Bible that sanctioned that sort of thing, the servant's position in respect to his master. Being a virtuous woman, however, and not accustomed to hunting excuses for sin, her knowledge of the Bible was not of the freshest, hence she refrained from quoting the passage. Still, she knew it was there; sometime she would look for it. Enid had such an uncompromising way of speaking at times of these shifts and changes that all men must make, now and then, in order to better themselves.

"No," said she; "I don't think it was contemptible, exactly. Men must do these things, Enid, in order to get on."

"Yes, mamma, I am familiar with the excuse."

There was just a trace of sarcasm in her reply, exciting her mother to wonder, uneasily, whether she had ever come to a clandestine understanding of the way by which her husband Potiphar had "got on." She hoped not; Enid might not like it; girls were so foolish! Potiphar had begun his career in the oil regions in Ohio; a struggling young lawyer a dozen years ago, with scarcely means to pay his office rent. At that time there was a great wave of "popular discontent" over the

doings of the Saviour Oil Co., which had a way of blowing-up and otherwise crushing its rivals in order to mitigate the evils of competition in oil. Potiphar Phillips had familiarised himself thoroughly with the methods of the Saviour Co.; succeeded in securing no end of testimony against them, which he brought out on the preliminary trial. The following day he threw up the case, and was made attorney for the oil company with headquarters in Chicago. Thence he rose rapidly with "the light of the world." His name was fateful, perhaps, after all.

All of which Mrs. Anthony knew, but wisely said nothing.

Howbeit Potiphar did not limit his practice to the interests of the Saviour Oil Co.; once on a time he had served as city attorney, and thereafter had been much the vogue as a criminal lawyer. Men of his talent, we find, are generally very resourceful; in fact, in all his career he had made but one out-and-out blunder, which happened in this wise. It was a case of murder. All murderers, it may be conceded, are rather slippery fellows, and this one especially; being charged, indeed, with making soap of his wife. One should not blame an attorney for slipping, in an instance of this sort, perhaps. Nor was there the slightest doubt of the man's guilt; yet when Potiphar took the case every one felt assured that the fellow would be acquitted. This was what Potiphar was employed for; law being not a question of justice, but of competition between lawyers. Justice has small chance with a dull lawyer, crime has much with a bright one—as criminals generally know.

Consequently Potiphar's final plea in this trial, though startling, was none the less convincing. "Your honour, gentlemen of the intelligent jury,

ladies and gentlemen," said he suavely after the prisoner's guilt had been fully established. "I wish to call your attention to a crucial point in this case hitherto overlooked. After profoundest research, investigation, and inquiry, I have discovered the fact that this prisoner is a twin whose brother died a natural death several years ago. Now I therefore take occasion to warn you that nowhere, in all the history of the world, has a twin ever been hanged, or suffered from false accusation, whose brother has died a natural death. Aye," he pounded the jury-rail fiercely with his fist, "*I defy anyone in all this world to cite me one single instance to establish such a precedent!*"

The effect was electrical; no one being able to establish such a precedent when challenged, for several days thereafter the criminal's life hung in the balance, with the chances in favour of his going scot-free. But now when the case had reached this stage, and all knew that nothing short of a miracle would make it possible for the State to convict, a strange thing happened; one of those satirical tricks of Mammon that may even go so far as to hang a man for murder or leave him an ornament to the luxurious society of the nineteenth century. For, as we have shown, it takes money to prove a man's innocence in these days, and, obviously, the more money the more innocence.

In need of funds, therefore, to meet a payment on a certain desirable piece of real-estate, Potiphar had taken a note to his banker for discounting, which had been given him as a fee by the murderer and purported to be endorsed by one of the murderer's friends, a man of property. The note called for ten thousand dollars. At the bank, turning the note over in his hands and studying the

endorsement critically, the usurious gentleman within the gilt cage sniffed doubtfully—

“Have you—er—ever spoken to the endorser about this, Mr. Phillips?”

Potiphar shook his head, squarely. “No—what’s the use! He’s good for it, ain’t he?”

“Oh, assuredly,” purred the banker, blandly; “he’s good—if he agrees to it. This isn’t his signature. It’s a forgery.”

“A forgery? Good heavens!” And he had even advanced the murderer four thousand on it, where-with to buy dainties and entertain his friends in his cell! Oh, it was awful! He had never even *imagined* anything like that. Out of the bank and into the basement beneath he stumbled, seeking a balm in Gilead. The bar-tender handed him bottle and glass, which he filled to the brim; his trembling hand arousing the young man’s sympathetic curiosity. “How is the case going, Mr. Phillips?” he asked. Mr. Phillips filled up his glass, twice, thrice; gazed at his questioner with blank, inscrutable eyes, whispering solemnly. “Sh! old man; it’s all a forgery!”

Thence to the street, unsteadily, where he met a pair of convivia, who, seeing that he was labouring under great mental stress, generously took his arm and helped him along. In another of those gilded retreats he was asked, after the glasses were emptied, whether the rumour was true that he was going to support the prohibition ticket that spring? Usually Potiphar was witty when in his cups, as everyone knew, but now he could only reply, sadly, as he shook his head, his accents fraught with the profoundest philosophy—

“Sh! old man; ish all a forzhra!”

When he reached his office, his clerk sent word home to his wife that Potiphar was out of town;

would probably be absent for a week; called suddenly. Late in the day came Mr. James Dana to consult with him about pending troubles at the Wheeling Car Works and the advisability of reducing wages. Whereto Potiphar, fetching his fist down on his desk vigorously: "Thash ri, old man; ish all a forzhra!" causing the millionaire to jump at this sudden and unexpected truthful thrust. And following him came President Little, of Rockland University, to speak with him privately about this troublesome spirit of discontent on the part of the public. "They are demanding municipal ownership of the gas-works now owned by Mr. Rockland," protested the good doctor. Mr. Rockland, who owned the Saviour Oil Co., for which Potiphar was the attorney! "It is all the work of Professor Moore," the doctor avowed in disgust. "That man will have to be silenced, sir!"

Rising on legs that rebelled, Potiphar tottered towards him, seized him by his lapels. "Sh! don' shay a word, old man!" he admonished mysteriously. "Ish all a forzhra!"

At his window, high up in the great office building, he stood gazing out on the city; the great department stores; the towering granite beehives where dwelt the ignoble, miscellaneous swarm of agents who produced nothing and subsisted on legitimate fleecings; the splendid banks where money was so cheap and the poor bankers complained at their inability to loan; and the pygmy humanity rushing in and out, in and out. All was a strange jangle, disharmony; the crazy, incessant cries of people out in the hall sounded in through his transom: "Going up! Going down!" with the hideous jar and rattle of iron doors swinging open and shut. Potiphar saw it all; heard it all. The scene swam

before him. Raising the sash suddenly and leaning far out, he shouted, passionately, impulsively—

“Stop! Stop! Ish all a forzhra, I shay!”

His clerks heard him and pulled him in out of danger. It was the first time they had ever heard Potiphar tell the plain unvarnished truth about things; when he had actually been able to judge the industrial world aright, once—and that, *O tempora! O mores!* only because he was drunk.

Naturally, Enid's husband had little sympathy or tolerance for the ideas advocated by Professor Kenneth Moore. “Why, if his theories should prevail, Enid, his notion of public ownership of all public utilities, society would be overthrown; at least the society that supports me and some other men. Then what should we do?”

She appeared not alarmed. “Do you think we should starve, Potiphar?”

“Humph! Well, no; we shouldn't starve, exactly, but it would tend to kill all aspiration—destroy all that's best in a man.”

She was silent; it may have been this too visible posing before her of “all that's best in a man.”

“I expect to be downtown about noon,” she remarked. “Shall we lunch together?”

Potiphar plead excuses, with genuine regret. He was sorry, but expected to lunch with a party of business men. “Remember, Enid,” he called back at the door, “I have tickets to-night for the opera. Good-by.”

It was still too early for her to start downtown, and she turned to her music. For a space she wandered vaguely through a wilderness of sounds; a stray note of winsome sweetness here, the melancholy flutter of wings overhead for a moment, and then again the silence, the silence. The ripple of the accompaniment murmured monotonous-

ly like the fret of falling water, and there was not a human soul in sight. Music, that mirroring stream wherein one gazes, Narcissus-like, merely to find the reflection of one's own face—nothing else, she felt.

It was not satisfying. She rose. "Mamma, don't you want to go with me? A little drive will do you good."

"Mercy no, dear!" she declared, her paper rustling with decision. "It would give me a frightful headache to drive at this hour."

For some reason, as she stepped into the carriage she directed the coachman to drive out past the Rockland University, thence by the boulevard into the city. It is out of the way, but will be a change, she partly explained to herself, settling back in the cushions. Moreover, she had never seen those magnificent buildings, situated in the full stare of the boulevard midst the homes of the wealthy and fashionable in order, perhaps, that such might feel properly thrilled with pride on beholding at once this pedestal and monument of their extensive fortunes, that they might approximate, even, the grateful feelings of Constantine, when, beholding the dangerous growth of Christianity, he remarked to his wife, *sub rosa*: "It is a good thing, my dear; I propose to take it in."

It was a gray day; the ground was bare and frozen, snow falling in a slanting, desultory fashion as they neared the quadrangle. Aye, the buildings were proud, massive, defiant; yet was there somewhat absent, one scarcely could define it; lack of colour, warmth, life, causing each particular facade to frown at one, ominously. No classic elms nor stately oaks served to veil this alma mater, through whose boughs, be it spring or dead of winter, the whispering voice as of a nun at prayer

should breathe eternally: "Esto perpetua; esto perpetua." On the contrary, everything bore the stamp and blazonry of that modern brigand, the captain of industry.

Enid saw no one, save one solitary student who ran across the quadrangle, his coat collar turned up, a book under each arm. What would happen to a man, she wondered, if the weight of all those buildings and the force behind them should chance to fall upon him? And had Kenneth never thought of that?

As her carriage crossed the street-car tracks she saw some one waiting on the farther corner. It was Professor Thurston; she stopped and beckoned to him.

"You are going downtown?" he asked.

She made way on the seat for him. "What an awfully dreary spot!" she exclaimed. "You see, I've been visiting your university. Of course I saw only the outside; shouldn't dare to go in. Do your students have military discipline; and have you any cannon?"

The professor smiled. "Yes," he sighed, stepping in; "we have military discipline, and expect to have cannon before long. Anything that's new and startling, wholly outrageous, will probably be a good plan in this city."

"You don't like us, I fear?"

"Frankly, no," he returned; "everything is so horribly new. There's no rest for the eye or the soul anywhere."

He spoke with a courteous, mildly deprecatory drawl; being a professor of Latin, everything new was the object of his scholarly detestation. "Your lake, even——" he began again.

"Thank you; you are very generous."

"No, you are quite welcome, I assure you. Your

lake, even, the shores of your lake, might be made so beautiful, so restful; but instead of that your rich people stick up outrageous monuments of various kinds along its shores as though continually to remind the traveller, entering the city for the first time, of this arrogant, immodest newness. I suppose you've seen the new bronze group of Indians holding a scalping reception, commemorative of some historic event of only fifty years ago, that Mr. Wheeling has just unveiled in front of his residence. I declare, it's beastly; I always feel like calling the patrol to carry off the remains."

Enid laughed. She did not try, however, to defend that particular work of art against the professor's criticism.

"I've only found one person," he drawled, "who really enjoys that monument, laughs whenever he passes it. And that is Professor Moore."

"Indeed?" Her voice showed interest scarcely merited.

"Yes; Moore insists that those Indians are wholly beautiful and appropriate, in that particular spot; claims it is a symbol of evolution, as nowadays it is Mr. Wheeling who is scalping the people, instead of those Indians; says it always reminds him of that fine old Presbyterian hymn, 'Here I'll raise my Ebenezer.' "

The carriage turned through the park, down the broad, winding drives sweeping round the lagoons that were now frozen, where parties of school children skated, shouted and enjoyed themselves to the full, just as though everything had not been so "horribly new." The trees had already grown into a beautiful forest, pleasing to penetrate even in mid-winter; winding walks, rising banks and sloping-valleys, frozen beds where flowers and flowering shrubs had been, haunts of June in January.

The professor continued his drawl. But she knew his habit; knew he was fain to humour himself by walking backward through life, in consequence of which he was eternally hitting his back against some obstacle, generally something new. One of that strange yet helpless type sometimes known as conservative, whose heads the Infinite jester has seen fit to set upon shoulders in a position opposite to normal, then giving them the command, "March!" continually towards the West, with faces fixed religiously upon the Eternal East. Chains rattled when they moved, and the snows of Siberia were in their lingering steps.

Enid often felt like asking him if his feet didn't get cold.

"I read your magazine article," she said quietly, "in this month's *American*."

His eyes brightened. "Ah, did you like it? No? Oh, well; I knew you wouldn't; very few people are capable of liking truth."

The article in question had been merely a Latin teacher's tirade and disapproval of popular education—of the education of the masses beyond the merest rudiments; he had deplored the fact that the perfume of the Attic violet was being driven out from the American university by the stench of the chemist's crucible. That was all. She did not agree.

"I only know, Mrs. Phillips, that truth is beauty, and that this thing we see, this widespread clamour for so-called equality of opportunity, is the reverse of beautiful. Hence I prefer to shun it."

She did not pursue it. That truth meant growth, therefore life, and not an idol in the East, was a fact to be learned by experience. If this failed to instruct, convince, then nothing would. The Infinite must have his little joke out, and if the

professor's feet really did get cold he could don his overshoes.

Downtown, where the boulevard approached the lake, their carriage was brought to a halt by a great crowd gathered round a cleared space in the center of which a balloon was filling; its fandus already high in the air, flaunting to the eyes of everyone the banner which bore the name of the firm that chose this method of advertising its industrial supremacy—

MOSES, JONES & CO., THE SUPREME!

"Dear me! we are blocked. Would you mind walking?"

"Oh, no," Thurston complied, helping her out with alacrity; "certainly not, if it will help us to avoid this beastly balloon ascension." They pushed their way on through the crowd. "Wait!" he exclaimed suddenly, stopping short. "There is Moore now—do you see him? Ah, you might know he would be here. How the fellow seems to fancy it, too!"

As they paused, a young girl approached, making her way through the midst till she reached the center. She was enveloped in a long cloak, buttoned only at the neck, which fell away and revealed the slight but perfectly moulded form of the athlete, clad in tights. The trapeze bar dangling from the balloon was barely touching the ground.

Kenneth stood there, absorbed in the drama; the musing, half satirical expression of his giving place to a flush of indignation as he beheld the young girl. Enid and Thurston approached behind him; she touched him on the arm.

He started. "Enid? Ah, how are you, Thurston? So you've come to see the great sacrifice sale initiated, too. Well, it's a bargain. Have you

seen the girl? Moses, Jones & Co. are about to rear their altar high in the air. Behold the victim!"

The air was quiet overhead, the sky clear and blue, and the temperature scarce to be called cold; yet a bonfire of dry-goods boxes blazed within the circle, towards which the "victim" spread her hands. One saw that she shivered slightly.

Enid clutched his arm. "Good heavens! They won't let that child go up a day like this, will they?"

"Surely," he answered. "Don't you see it's a large crowd, and a fairly quiet day? They can't afford to miss this opportunity of advertising, you know; especially when it is claimed that the average person hasn't intelligence enough to purchase goods without this sort of thing to advise him."

She made no answer; it frightened her. She looked out over the lake.

Professor Thurston looked bored—and stamped his feet!

Columbus, from the height of his pedestal on the lake front, turned his benign glance over the scene. Four hundred years ago he had landed on American shores, encountered savages; but such were tame, gentle, civilised, compared to these be-furred and be-frocked and be-damned individuals who stood round with their hands in pockets, calmly, listlessly observant of the helpless girl.

"But why does she do it, Kenneth?" Enid cried. "Why can't she do something else?" And unable to conceal her alarm she added, compassionately: "Can't you stop it, somehow?"

She saw his face twitch as he answered, endeavouring to preserve indifference. "Tut, we mustn't get excited over these little things, you know. Don't you recollect what the Mikado said to Koko? 'My dear fellow, tomorrow you are to be boiled in

oil. Yes, it's very sad, I know; I will admit that it's even a bad law, and shall have it changed at the next session of the legislature. But of course that won't do you any good. Koko, farewell!"

"Oh, don't," she protested, amazed at his heartlessness. "Let us go on."

"No, stay! I'll answer you, if you insist. Well, she does it because she is honest, and can make an *honest* living no other way. Poor thing! She's yet to learn that honesty is her misfortune—she's quite pretty, you see. This is only one of the million of instances which a fraudulent society imposes upon the helpless, the good, and the worthy. Men and women, you know, seek to gratify their desires with the least exertion—that's one of the first laws of biology and political economy. Well, then, when society places a premium on crime and the unnatural, crime and the unnatural will thrive. There is no such thing as a criminal; but the whole world sobs with the voices of hapless and guiltless victims. Thurston, I beg your pardon."

Professor Thurston smiled. "My dear fellow," he drawled, "don't mention it. I've heard it all before."

The trapeze was now on a level with the girl's head. Throwing aside her cloak, she seized a couple of small flags, held them between her teeth the while she caught the bar with her hands, then shot straight up like a rocket. On a level with the tallest buildings she had swung her feet into the angles where the ropes held the bar, and now hung face downward, waving a flag patriotically in either hand—"Moses, Jones & Co., The Supreme!" Again and again she waved them whilst the balloon soared swiftly upward—

"MOSES, JONES & CO., THE SUPREME!"

A series of evolutions she performed, pretty, picturesque, pitiable, the while the balloon hung stationary for a space, or moved slightly inland. After all, breathed the onlookers during a moment's respite, it was perfectly safe; it was enterprising, attractive; was purely a matter of business; no occasion for false sentiment. But ah! what ailed the girl—why wasn't she tending to business? A moment ago she was holding herself straight out from the bar; then a sudden breeze struck the balloon, careening it in a manner that made one dizzy to see, and leaving her hanging with only one small hand between heaven and earth. Completely round and back again she spun, still clinging tight with her left hand,—one saw plainly it was her left,—and presently catching its wrist with her right. Whereupon the bar tilted upward; a half inch more—a quarter, even, and she might have seized it, though all this while her body was streaming behind like the tail of a kite as the balloon shot out over the lake.

A sigh rose up from the crowd, gathered volume, pointed into a shriek. A woman fainted. Meanwhile a steam launch that had been lying in wait—of course it was! All accidents were provided against by Moses, Jones and Co.—started after her.

At the inquest it was claimed that her hand got cold, that she was careless, frightened, some claimed indifferent. At any rate the coroner said that everything was all right.

"No, I don't blame Moses, Jones and Co., nor the girl," Kenneth repeated slowly as they made their way out. "It's the system, the hellish system that permits, nay, that compels such things—that is

what ought to be changed. Ah, here's a drug-store. Enid, won't you have a cup of hot chocolate, hot soda—anything? Thurston, my dear fellow! you stamp your feet as if they were actually frozen!"

CHAPTER XV.

THE EVOLUTION OF A GREASE-SPOT.

It was manifestly with scant regard for the breach constantly widening that winter between him and certain wealthy exploiters of labour, that Kenneth Moore continued his public denouncing, and, what was worse, his public laughter at those more flagrant institutions wherein their sacred capital was invested. "Our capital," cried one of these men, in an open letter to the public—"Our capital, against which this anarchist professor raves, was honestly earned, consisting entirely of wages saved!" Whereto the professor had merely returned, courteously: "Whose wages is it you have 'saved'—your own, or your men's?" The silence that followed was profound; broken only by laughter, and a cautious whisper from the capitalists that "they had treated this anarchist's slur with the silence and contempt that it merited." Doubtless they had, having long been famous for their silence and contempt!

So far, curiously enough, aside from a little muttering, nothing had occurred to bring him into conflict with the financiers behind the Rockland University. True, he had had much to say about municipal gas ownership, which was in direct opposition to Mr. Rockland's purse and aspirations. Once, only, had Dr. Little sent for him, to discuss

in a kindly spirit the obvious tendency of some of his public utterances. "I wish, Professor Moore," the president had said, "that you could see your way to following a little more the—er—orthodox principles of economics as laid down by Professor Lawrence in his text-book. I know you don't agree with him, wholly—but neither do I, for that matter. Still, he is at least conservative; and as it is only human to err, were it not best to err on the safe side?"

Kenneth smiled, wondering whether the president had really deserted that innocent little teeter of his, with its eternal: "Perfectly balanced, sir! perfectly balanced!" whilst it boosted now Lawrence into the air, and now himself. "I regret," he had protested mildly, "that there are some axioms 'laid' by Professor Lawrence, some principles in his text-book that I could not conscientiously prescribe for the young, the innocent, the thoughtless; and so——"

"Oh—oh—my dear fellow! Of course I wouldn't have you say anything against your conscience, you know. Not at all! What I wish is that you might avoid the moot shoals, and sail well out where the bottom is unknown or at least purely speculative—ah, yes, purely speculative. And after all, my dear Dr. Moore, is it not rather in these higher and deeper questions, involving faculty of constructive imagination, that a scientist most truly serves the public?"

The president's face was touched with an instant's seraphic glory; it beamed, broadened into a smile. He had in sooth an exceedingly joyous and child-like smile, which generally caused his listener to respond, sympathetically; so that now, beholding Kenneth's face light up, without pausing

to question whether it were in mischief or agreement, he went on—

“There, there! Steer your ship well out at sea, professor, and for heaven’s sake keep off the rocks! That’s all, good-by.”

After this manner he had been warned.

A week or two following this he received a letter from his uncle, Edward Mason. “If convenient,” he wrote, “come out to my house to-night. A person whom I wish you to see will be there. He is an oil man; knows the history of Rockland and his Saviour Oil Co. from A to izzard. I think he may interest you.”

Kenneth threw the letter aside. Now what do I care about this oil company or its history? he asked himself. This concerns Rockland and his university; obviously it is one of those “moot shoals” that Dr. Little would have me avoid, the while I occupy myself with loftier things requiring the “faculty of constructive imagination.”

Mabel entered, whilst he sat there musing; she had just returned from downtown. “Still studying, Kenneth?” she asked. “You ought to go out a little while before dark—it’s a beautiful day.”

She sat near him, without removing her wraps. “You know, I’ve found a new teacher,” she continued. “He’s a Pole, I believe; anyway, he’s one of the best in the world.”

Kenneth made no reply; then, rousing himself, with a start: “What’s that—a new teacher? That’s good!”

“Yes, but he’s awfully expensive, you know; three dollars a lesson, and says that I ought to come three times a week.”

“Oh, does he? Confound the fellow! That’s half my salary.”

Mabel smiled pleasantly. “Yes, I know; isn’t it

a nuisance to be so outrageously poor! I was going to ask, though, if you don't expect a raise in your salary this spring?"

He shook his head. "No; not the least chance of it, I'm sorry to say."

She removed her hat and cape, laying them on his desk, and began slowly to draw off her gloves. "Really, Kenneth, I should think you would be sick of it. Such a miserable little salary!"

"Yes, yes," he cried, stung to impatience, yet half ashamed, for it was none too pleasant to be accused by her of financial incompetency; "I know it has not been sufficient, Mabel; mine is not a money-making business; we must——"

"Then why don't you quit it; why on earth don't you do something?" she demanded, her voice suddenly raucous with the pent indignity of virtue long suffering and unrewarded, the swan-song of the decadent middle-class. "Must we go on trying to live on a miserable little salary hardly fit for a clerk in a department store?"

"But Mabel, listen! you don't consider——"

"Consider!" she went on, contemptuously; "consider! I don't care to consider! Haven't we lived quietly and economically ever since we were married, only to find ourselves running behind more and more at the end of every month? Yet the papers all say that times are getting better every day. Why don't you find some other business, Kenneth? Else tell Dr. Little that he has got to double your salary. Anyway he ought to be ashamed to pay anyone such a mean little sum. I always thought the professors in that university got rich!"

She paused; visions of granite walls, luxurious halls with marble wainscoting, faded into a whited sepulchre wherein she lay gasping for breath. It,

too, was all a fraud, she must conclude; neither better nor worse than paste diamond or other society make-believe. Once she dreamt that her husband had a future; knew beyond doubt that he was the intellectual superior of any man she had ever met; knew that it was he, moreover, who had done more than anyone else to bring the university into prominence in all matters of social and economic reform. Even the newspapers had something to say of him editorially in nearly every issue; cautiously, uncertainly, it is true, as though vaguely apprehensive of the ultimate drift of his argument; still it was his name, Dr. Kenneth Moore, associate professor in sociology—his the name and the force. Then again fell athwart her the shadow of Dr. Little. Monument of injustice! Aye, she knew that no man who spent his life in clubs, wine-suppers, toadying after millionaires, could possibly be worth ten thousand dollars a year if her husband were worth only one thousand!

She rose. "Wait, Mabel; do please listen a moment." He caught her skirt, drawing her unwillingly towards him so that she sat upon his knee. "You see it——"

"Oh, don't; don't argue. You know I hate it. But you, it is your study, your delight. Please let me go, Kenneth."

He released her. She stooped, laboriously, picking up her gloves from the floor, hat and wraps from his desk, and was passing out when he said: "I was only going to say that the lessons could probably be managed, Mabel, especially after we get moved."

"Get moved?"

"Yes. Hasn't that real-estate agent been to look at the house yet?"

She turned away. "I have not seen him," she

answered, leaving him to himself. Why would he persist in piling Pelion upon Ossa!

No, she had not seen him; hence her husband inferred that she knew naught of the matter. There is such a vast gulf yawning between to see and to know—on convenient occasions. She never pretended to a nicety of choice in words; mere words, which are ever of doubtful utility save in the mouth of an expert.

“You see, Edward,” said Mrs. Mason, in passing comment upon this misunderstanding, instance of everyday infelicity between young married people who do not yet know their own minds—“you see it was this way. Kenneth has some very peculiar notions on economy, in fact, I believe he makes a specialty of it—didn’t you say it was economy, Edward? Yes; I’m sure you did. It’s a perfect hobby, you know; he rides it to death, and you know *that’s* enough to make a perfect miser of any man. So he got it into his head that they ought to sell their home—think of it, the place where they had been born and raised!—and go to live out in the suburbs somewhere. Now did you ever hear of anything so ridiculous? But it’s just like him—he’s his father again all over; headstrong, unreasonable, unpractical. I declare, it makes me mighty sorry for Mabel sometimes when I recollect the mixed blood that boy has in his veins. I’m always afraid of it; you can’t never tell just when it’s going to break out. Pshaw! wasn’t it the craziest piece of nonsense you ever heard, him marrying her—the doctor, I mean, and his wife? But she *was* beautiful, Edward, wasn’t she? And, O my! didn’t he just perfectly worship her?”

She paused abruptly, obedient to some enravishing vision of the past that held her. Woman-like, she never could speak of that affair with any sense

or patience—and what had she done with her handkerchief?

“You were speaking, Helen,” observed Mr. Mason with a start at her sudden pause; nor could he hope to continue his paper with any satisfaction till she began again. The habitual environment of the individual shall not be suddenly destroyed without danger.

“Oh, I’m sorry, Edward; I’m very sorry I disturbed you, she apologised hastily.

“No; it’s no matter, Helen,” he protested, soothed again into easeful insensibility as the stream flowed on. “Pray continue.”

“Well, I was only saying, Edward, how it happened that Kenneth didn’t come to sell his house. It seems he had foolishly made arrangement with some real-estate agent to fetch a party to look at it. The party was to call on a Friday, and that was—let me see—about six weeks ago. Well, Mabel came running to tell me about it, just about broken-hearted over the matter, and I said to her, says I: ‘Mabel, never you mind. When Friday comes I’ll be there!’ So, sure enough, I kept track of the days, and was over there bright and early Friday morning almost as soon as Kenneth had left the house. Then I sent Mabel off downtown with Miss Nielsen to do some shopping for me, and I went to work and straightened up their house. Mabel is a very neat housekeeper, too, and there wasn’t much to be done wherever she had had a hand in the management, I tell you. But land sakes! you just ought to have seen the room that boy works in. Books scattered all over the room, on the floor, on the chairs, and on the desk, and most of them wide open just as he left them. But I closed them all up and put them away carefully on the shelves; then I picked up the papers that

were scattered all over his desk and made one nice, neat pile of them and placed a paper weight on top. I tell you, I'll bet he doesn't know to this day whom he has to thank for that, Edward!

"Then when the doorbell rang I went to the door, and there, sure enough, stood the party who had come to buy the house. He was all alone, no agent nor nobody with him.

"'Is this house for sale, madam?' says he, as I opened the door, looking sort of forbidding-like, I suspect.

"'Oh no,' says I; 'why, I never heard of such a thing!'

"'In—indeed!' says he, stammering; 'pray excuse me, madam. I must have made a mistake in the number.'

"Then I just bowed, you know, sort o' stiff like, and shut the door, and the party went off down the street; and Mabel says he never bothered them again any more. Now I think that was a very nice way out of it. Don't you, Edward?"

In response to Mr. Mason's letter Kenneth called as requested, and was introduced to the person he had expected to meet. "Mr. Abrams has come to me, Kenneth," explained Mason, "on account of that little suit I won against Rockland and his Saviour Oil Co. several years ago."

"Ah, he is a believer in miracles repeating themselves. Oil is your business, Mr. Abrams?"

Abrams replied yes, for over twenty years he had been with Van Syckel in New Jersey and Titusville, and Rice of Marietta; was with old Van when he first began his experiments on the Jersey flats with what he called his continuous process—that is, to feed in petroleum at one end and have kerosene running continuously out of the other. By the old process, he explained, it was necessary to shut

down every day and cool off; but Van's continuous process had stopped all that waste. Then they had moved out to Titusville and erected a large refinery. At this point they first came into contact with the Saviour Oil Co., which had a little two-by-four refinery there at that day, the owner of which lived in Cleveland. That was Mr. Rockland. Rockland never interfered with them at that time, however, as he knew nothing whatever of the practical details of the business by which they were able to get eighty gallons of kerosene out of one hundred gallons of crude oil, whereas he could only get sixty-five gallons at the most.

"Besides," the man continued, "we were the first to build a pipe-line to transport oil. It was Van Syckel's idea, and cost enormously; we had to fight the teamsters and the oil combination. It was a success, you know, from the very first, but old man Van Syckel lost every penny. He had put up his pipe-line as security for a debt until the profits should wipe it out. In a few months the profits had paid his debt, but he never got back his pipe-line and hadn't money enough left to sue for it. To-day the Saviour Oil Co. owns it, and the old man's original idea, his pipe-line, has grown into a system thousands of miles long."

Kenneth took out his note book. Another flagrant instance of the survival of the unfittest. The man who had the genius, the skill, the capital, the daring, and the ability to put an idea into execution, to-day has nothing; whereas the Saviour Oil Co., which never invented, never prospected, never experimented, never developed one solitary improvement in that commodity is now receiving the thanks and the dollars of the civilised world. "Go on, Mr. Abrams."

"Well, sir, I stayed with Van Syckel, and we

finally got a lease and broke ground again to put up a still. But we had hardly got the pipe and brick on the ground when the leading representative of the Saviour Co. gave us a call. He wanted the old man to accept a salary and not build a refinery in opposition to them. But Van Syckel said: 'No, I am going to build and run this refinery on the continuous plan.' 'Very well,' the Saviour combine answered, 'you can make nothing if you do build it. We have arrangements with the railroads that will prevent it. You can get no cars!'"

"Have you had experience in shipping oil over the railroads, Mr. Abrams?" Kenneth interrupted.

"Oh, yes, a great deal, sir. I was with the Merrill Oil Co. in Boston when the Saviour people began to freeze them out. We owned our own tank-cars in which we shipped the crude from Olean to Boston. Between those points the rate was fifty cents a barrel; but from the railroad station in Boston to our refinery, a distance of only two miles, the railroad charges were ten dollars a car, or about one dollar and a quarter a barrel. We made repeated efforts, personal solicitations, to the railroad officers, and to the railroad commissioners also, but it was the established rate, they said."

"Do you remember what railroad that was, Mr. Abrams?"

"The New York and New England. They charged us six dollars for hauling a car one mile and a half."

Mr. Mason smiled. "The president of the New York and New England R. R. at that time was one of the trustees of the Saviour Oil Co.," he observed.

Abrams nodded. "Yes, we had to sell our tank-cars to the Saviour Oil combination, sir, because we no longer had any use for them."

"I understand," Kenneth assured him. "But

what became of Van Syckel and his continuous process—did he build his refinery?”

“No. It was about half completed when the oil combination again called. They said they would furnish him money to prove his invention if he would only stop building. Accordingly he made a trip to New York and called at the office of one of the members of the trust to whom he had been directed. This official pretended to be very glad to see him, saying that he was very sorry to learn that a man of his ability should have been so long unfortunate in the oil business. ‘We will allow you ten thousand dollars to prove your inventions,’ said he, ‘and if they are satisfactory we will pay you one hundred thousand dollars for your patents. Meanwhile we shall allow you a salary of one hundred and twenty-five dollars a month to support your family.’

“This being agreed upon,” continued Abrams, “the combination demolished his works and carted the brick off to the junk-yard. And after keeping the old man waiting for over three years, taking no measures to test his inventions, they finally informed him that his process for refining was impracticable. We afterwards proved, though, that we could make one thousand barrels of oil in one day by his process, whereas it took three or four days by the old way.”

“He tested it himself, did he?” asked Kenneth, with growing interest.

“Oh, yes, sir. We built three independent refineries only to be ruined and demolished each time by the oil combination through the methods I have mentioned. The old man finally died, broken-hearted, and I went to work for the Saviour people. And this, sir, is why I called to see Mr. Mason: I have information regarding an explo-

sion of a rival refinery two years ago that was planned and accomplished by the trustees of the Saviour Oil Co."

"Good heavens! Then why have you kept it a secret for two years?"

The man explained, with some confusion, causing Kenneth at first to doubt his veracity. The tale was too brutal, too barbarous in its ruthless sacrifice of life and property for him to accept it in its entirety. History had told him of the slain in battle, the murder of courtly intrigue, the savage massacre; but in all his knowledge, for cold-blooded cunning and red-handed ruin, he had never heard anything to compare with this piece of nineteenth century villainy on the part of the Saviour Oil Co. that Abrams there revealed to him. And this company, he reflected quickly whilst Abrams spoke, this burning brand of the devil that poses as the light of the world, forsooth, is my paymaster; is engaged in the noble task of founding universities, supporting churches, and endowing libraries! This is the hand that feeds me!

Walking home in the night he pondered over it, indignantly at first, madly. To think that people should bow down and submit themselves as slaves to a highwayman oil institution that owned church and university, controlled sugar, steel, and countless other trusts, fairly owning the Government itself! Finally, however, anger gave place to satire, and satire to amusement. After all, what a sublime jest it all was, this thing of oil and religion and steel going hand in hand, this immaculate trinity raised on high for fools to bow to! As a jester, Rockland, perhaps, was even superior to that rascally Constantine, inasmuch as he was richer and so more powerful. Then again he became more serious, yet thrilled with the optimistic ideals that

never quite deserted him. After all, he reflected, the very same principle that causes a man to monopolise heaven and earth to his own ends, must inevitably crush him. Why does a monopoly erect a university which, in spite of its most watchful care, is bound and certain to inculcate principles which must shortly result in its paternal monopoly's overthrow? Why? Merely because the desire for the esteem of one's fellows is perhaps the strongest passion in man; the robber hates his ostracism, hence after robbing us roundly, must needs spend millions to purchase the public's esteem and kindly feeling. Every monopoly carries its own immanent principle of destruction. "The dice of God are always loaded."

He smiled, recalling Dr. Little's admonition: "Try and concern yourself more with questions involving those higher faculties of constructive imagination." Well, was he not doing so—with a vengeance?

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FAIRY GOD-MOTHER.

There is that in the spirit of your true pedagogue which is infectious. Not to all of us, of course, and especially not to thee, O Pharisee! who were born immune, bearing thine armour from primeval shores in endless passing review, yesterday, to-day, forever, proof incontrovertible of thine immortality. Nay, nor pedagogues nor ideas shall ever infect you. But to one in the professor's own household, as we have seen, his gospel had come as a definite key to long-thought intangible things.

Asked by Mr. Kent when her new manuscript

would be ready, Nannette had answered, pensively, that she could not tell. "It requires so much more study, more care, more art, more everything, you know, Mr. Kent, if one treats of real people instead of imaginary."

"Dear me! You aren't doing that, are you?" his accents full of solicitude.

She smiled. Mr. Kent was such an old maid, she sometimes thought. "I am trying something," she confessed, "that shall have some little human significance. Then if I fail I may return to the desert isle. However, there are more than enough dilettantes already."

Whereat he protested; her words were invidious, wholly uncomplimentary to the O. G. Goldsmith-Smith Publishing Co. that had "brought her out."—"I believe the professor has infected you," he declared.

"Infected me!" she objected stoutly. "No, indeed; I have a heart, Mr. Kent, that is all."

Well, but Mr. Kent had a heart, too, so he averred, although he never chose to announce it publicly. He felt, moreover, quite as strongly about matters of everyday economic interests as she did; sympathised with her wholly. "But I assure you, Miss Nielsen, that the reading public doesn't care a—a dime for all this. It is all a pitfall for the inexperienced literary worker." He had watched it for several years; had noted how nearly every writer had once tried to give the world one book that should do it some good—and had failed. Thereafter they had confined their efforts to books that would sell.

"I beg you," he closed, "not to forsake your original work."

And a few evenings thereafter had come Mr. Goldsmith-Smith, in splendid attire, from the tips

of his patent-leathers to the crown of his hat; paid for, too, from the profits of *The Desert Isle*. He had heard the report of her back-sliding, and naturally, as her publisher and well-wisher, was alarmed. "The public, my dear Miss Nielsen, is seeking only amusement. Wouldn't you like to go to the theatre?"

She thought so, and complied—yes, with genuine pleasure; ran to get ready. Smith smiled, placing a fat little finger in the dimple of his fat little chin. "Ah, I thought so," he said to himself; "she is like all the rest of us when she is honest with herself; she prefers amusement, too."

And she did enjoy it. It was one of those perennially picturesque things with mad-cap heroine, impecunious papa, dashing villain about to foreclose, and glorious lover who struts in just in the nick of time, hand on his hilt and a "How now, you knave!" All very ridiculous, of course, yet she laughed and clapped her hands as the curtain rang down, causing Mr. Goldsmith-Smith to again chuckle and congratulate himself modestly, musing the while: "Ah, it's as I thought. I am the only one who truly understands her."

Nor was he so very wrong, perhaps; especially as hers was one of those happy natures that can find momentary pleasure in all things without thinking too much at the time. Afterwards, though, in the seclusion of her own room, and deep, deep in her manuscript, some incident of that play would suddenly rise before her, calling out from its hollow of myth and mockery till she would fairly jump from her chair, fingers in both ears. Dear me! she would exclaim, are we such a little way from the chattering ape, after all?

Her mind at this time was receptive, moreover, to an extent that rendered methodical work well-

nigh impossible. She was going continually; when not with Mabel or Kenneth that publishing house of hers had a most seductive and bewildering way of alternating its favours. Even Mr. Kent, who had long renounced theatres, had fallen into the way of asking her now and again; and between the acts he expatiated.

"You see how it is, Miss Nielsen; a very ordinary play, by an ordinary company, run by a monopolistic theatre trust for the sole sake of extraordinary profits. You see all the old tricks and caricatures and unrealities—yet you laugh—enjoy it. When you stop to think about it seriously, it doubtless all seems very foolish and idiotic. Well, you must remember that you are the exception. The public has no psychology, never takes thought, and this play naturally pleases it. The theatre-trust knows this, and takes more interest in serving the ninety-and-nine who don't think than the one who does."

"How horrible that seems! Is it the profit-system, too, Mr. Kent?"

Mr. Kent smiled. "Yes, perhaps; you might ask the trust. However, that's the way it is with everything—even books. You must write of what is universal; and what is so universal as love, no matter how put?"

"I don't know, really, unless it be ignorance. Surely, that is universal. Why can't one speak of it?"

He shook his head. "You see, the public is sensitive. If it is a donkey it is also a child; hates to have its feelings hurt."

"Yet a child has to be punished, you know," she persisted.

He laughed; she was so little. "If you were capable," said he, "of taking this overgrown refractory child and giving it a good sound thrashing

I should be the last to say no. Not one author in a generation has been strong enough; the few that have we name heroes; those that have failed, cranks."

"But," she implored impatiently, "isn't it better to try, than to be a coward? You are unfair; you refuse me even a chance!"

"No, I beg your pardon; I didn't mean it so, I assure you. To tell the truth, I really believe you may be able to punish the public to your heart's content some day. Only not now; wait till your readers are assured. There!—there goes the curtain; it's the last act. Do you see the fairy god-mother, Miss Nielsen? Please don't forget her yet awhile—

"They reck but ill who leave me out!" "

When she got home that night she re-read her manuscript hurriedly, and again the next morning in a vain search for its fairy god-mother. Alas! the dear old lady was entirely absent; neither came nor went, promised nor threatened; had no part in her tale whatsoever. How foolish some men can be! she said, and took her story straightway to the professor, read him a chapter or two, unfolded her entire scheme and design. A tale of the nether side of things in a great city; true to the life, but unrelieved—oh, very much unrelieved.

"Little rebel," said he, tapping her lightly on the knuckles with his admonitory blue pencil, "little rebel! Don't; give it up."

She glanced at him quickly, discovering a fleeting, half-wearied expression she had seen much of late.

"O dear! Mr. Kent says I have forgotten the fairy god-mother."

"Yes, I'm afraid that you have," he agreed, smiling; "not even a millionaire sailing by in his yacht

to save the poor hero from drowning. Oh, no; it will never do. The world would never believe it. Little rebel, go back to your desert isle!"

"Nonsense!" she cried in vexation, rising and stamping one little foot—"nonsense! I sha'n't. No one believes in me; but I sha'n't write any more trash!" Out of the room she flew.

Then for days she never touched pen to paper; resolved to give up literature altogether; it was all such a fraud, anyway. She would devote herself wholly to music, engaging forthwith a famous instructor who flattered her. "Ah, mees, vat a hand for the violin! You a splendid tone have acquired yourself already."

And of course Mr. Goldsmith-Smith heard of it, and Mr. Kent. They called and protested separately, conjointly; but protested and called in vain.

"She is ruining herself," said Kent.

"Yes, and us, too," agreed Oliver; "our customers are fairly clamouring for something by the author of *The Desert Isle*."

"Well, they'll have to wait," Sam returned gloomily.

"But why the devil can't she be reasonable, Sam? It's all from living in the same house with Moore. He'd make an angel discontented!"

"Nonsense! he's not the cause, I tell you; regrets it as much as we do. He has enough on his own hands at present, without involving her."

"You mean with the men at Wheeling?"

"No, not altogether. It's oil, Oliver; oil! He's found a grease-spot on the threshold of his alma-mater—a particularly offensive grease-spot. Unlike Balzac's *peu de chagrin*, the spot grows larger instead of smaller the more he meditates and aspires, until it now covers the entire university—he

informed me the other day that the trail of the serpent, I mean the grease-spot, is over it all. Oil is devilish bad stuff to spread, after all."

"Gad! such a fellow!"

"But he's one of God's rebels, I tell you."

"Bah! And so is the devil."

Kent smiled. "Possibly," he admitted; "yet one makes for God, I believe, and the other against him. That is, unless you claim that competition is the same in religion as in other industries—the life of trade. Where would the church have been but for the devil?"

Howbeit the professor, as may readily be inferred, had not been asked to deliver that course of lectures in Dr. Griggs' church for the purpose of allaying popular discontent; what was better, though, Mabel had recently obtained a position in his choir that had enabled her to take up her lessons with the coveted celebrated Polish professor without asking Kenneth for further assistance. True, she did not like this arrangement, wholly; was none too fond of church music, and even less of Dr. Griggs' sermons. "Still, you don't need to listen, Mabel," her husband had said; "you must try and accustom yourself to thinking of something profitable whilst he is speaking. Any church-goer can do this after awhile."

As for himself, he often went with Mabel; Dr. Griggs' sermons always amused him immensely; they were so replete with theology and so utterly devoid of even the most elemental principles of biology. One would think, he would often find himself saying, that the two have nothing whatever in common—a God, obviously, who has nothing to do with life.

Yet were there times when, rising to join in the music or other exercise of the vast congrega-

tion, he would be struck all at once with consternation akin to despair. How was it possible, he mused, that he had come to stand so aloof from his fellow-men in all that they counted religion? Were his own enthusiastic and glowing beliefs, ideals, aspirations, less sacred and holy than theirs that he should feel thus ostracised in their midst? Or could it be that his ear alone, in all that multitude, caught the far-off strains of the martial oncoming hosts of democracy, rising always above the harsh voice of good Dr. Griggs as he went on pounding into the heads of his listeners the very latest theories respecting the vital subject of his morning's discourse, to wit, Recognition after Death?

And yet, as Kenneth knew, this minister had frequently expressed surprise that many people were ceasing to attend church, workingmen especially; but alas! it seemed quite impossible for Dr. Griggs to understand it, why the many had lost interest in this columned and vaulted sepulchre of so-called religion that had so persistently outraged their holiest convictions of morality and utilitarianism. "I know nothing of art, nothing of literature, of science, of sociology," the preacher had once stoutly protested from his pulpit: "all I know is Jesus Christ, and of him only shall I speak to you fifty-two Sundays in the year." That there was anything essentially immoral in such a declaration of agnosticism had doubtless never occurred to the preacher.

On still another morning, fearing by habit what the pastor was doomed to say, the professor's eyes had roamed hopelessly round the room as if seeking relief in vain, but resting at last on an inscription on the wall—

"We are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God."—Acts x, 33.

Ah, does that mean, I wonder, he found himself asking, exultantly, whether we are actually here to hear what God says now, to-day, or only what he is alleged to have said several thousand years ago in the Bible? Are we to have biology or theology?

The puzzle was solved directly by Dr. Griggs rising and announcing his text: "Keep me as the apple of thine eye."

Ah, I feared it, sighed the professor, settling down in his pew; it's on faith and holy superstition. Let us hear what God said to the intelligent public of four thousand years ago. Obviously their needs are our needs. What he says to-day isn't of the slightest consequence.

Dr. Griggs spoke on; told first of the wonderful anatomy of the eye, in man and other animals, especially the fish; not forgetting those fishes of the Mammoth Cave—no preacher ever forgets them!—which, poor things, are blind! Hence proving the perfect adaptation of the eye to its environment. "And even so," said he, "men adapt their moral natures to their environment."

The professor jumped. Good heavens! did the minister actually say that, or had he been dreaming? No; there it was again: "I say that men *must* adapt their moral natures to their environment." And then, squarely on top of this unfortunate biologic truism, came the contradictory command: "Keep me as the apple of thine eye!"

Kenneth smiled. Clearly people did have a most reprehensible way of adapting their moral natures to their environment; 'twas inevitable; occasioned all their misery. He was amused that the preacher should see anything to commend in such

an evil necessity. Our environment being false, it was plainly our duty to change it, to make it right; but instead of that, he was telling his congregation to adapt their moral natures to it. I wonder if he wants us to become rogues and rascals altogether? O egregious Dr. Griggs! You are in a very pretty pickle now. How can you ever contrive to get out of it?

Howbeit Dr. Griggs became suddenly shy of biology and confined himself strictly to his theology: "Keep me as the apple of thine eye." A sermon for faith pure and simple; a sermon entreating men to do the impossible in business, in society, in spite of their moral natures and environment. He eliminated all the forces of life, telling his congregation that everything would come out all right if they only preserved their natural superstition, kept it as the apple of their eye,—environment and moral natures to the contrary notwithstanding!

The preacher neared his peroration and the room became solemn, hushed. He had spoken of eternal life, and was now giving warning of its eternal antithesis. Kenneth glanced round him; the congregation for the greater part was listening respectfully, but vaguely; no one seemed to be very much alarmed. They were all, men, women and children, trying to do the best they could, and if God condemned them to eternal darkness they were manifestly helpless to change things. People must live, firstly; must get along the best they can; the Laws of Life were eternally paramount to the Theories of Death. Mr. Rockland and Dr. Little sat well up in front where people could see them; when the preacher at last lowered his voice to a raucous whisper, admonitory hand aloft: "Fire! fire! fire!" Mr. Rockland started visibly

and glanced up in alarm. Manifestly he had been thinking of his oil tanks.

CHAPTER XVII.

DR. LITTLE IS "POUNCED UPON."

For several weeks Kenneth and Mr. Mason had been hard at work on the story recited by Abrams. Together they investigated the details, examined and cross-examined their witness, made every act of his life clear and intelligible to themselves. Whole days and almost nights were spent in the task; the Saviour Oil Co. must be traced from the moment of its conception, some thirty-five years ago, down to its present high and astonishing seat in the heart of the Government itself. Pathway strewn with the wreck of its rivals, abandoned works; insane asylums crowded for space, but with memorial rooms and windows endowed by the Saviour Oil Co. Napoleon crossing the Alps and founding an Empire, with no vision as yet of the lightning of Waterloo.

Still, to write the whole history of the Law of Compensation, of Retribution, one has but to describe a circle.

"These are the facts, Mr. Mason," said Kenneth, "which I have been able to gather from an investigation by Congress in 1872. A contract was made between this Saviour Oil Co. and every railroad having access to the oil regions, by which the latter agreed as follows:

1. To double freight rates.
2. Not to charge *them* the increase in freight rates.

3. To give *them* the increase in freight collected from all competitors.
4. To make any other changes of rates necessary to guarantee their success in business.
5. To *destroy* their competitors by high freight rates.
6. To spy out the details of their competitors' business.

For several moments Mr. Mason made no reply. "Are you aware, Kenneth," he asked finally, "of what this may mean to you? Of course none but a fool would assert that you have made these investigations through envy or malice, or in any cause save that of truth and justice. Still, the world is an ass, you know, and it has a vicious kick backwards."

Soberly, with sincerity, the young man answered: "Yes, I know how that is—how it has ever been with the world. But that doesn't concern me, I have nothing to do with that side of the question. I am neither a crank nor a fanatic, and have given my whole life to this work in the name of science and society—in the name of God! I believe, moreover, that we are on the eve of a tremendous awakening, a grand readjustment."

"Oh yes, I agree with you," answered Mason, his penholder in his mouth, "there is no doubt of the conditions, of the awakening, and of your perfect sweetness of purpose. Still, a man must live and support his family, Kenneth. It is right, of course, for the scholar and thinker to probe to the bottom of these social lies and seek with all his might to overthrow them. But society demands that he shall also continue to live, and live well. You know it's but a sad day for prophets without means. Were Christ to preach to-day he must

first be a millionaire, else die a second time on the cross. But you have thought of these things, of course."

Silence followed the words. Yes, he knew society was ruthless, that it was not and never had been in a position where it could afford to be magnanimous; a harridan with the mask of innocence, that would fight to retain possession of its mask to the last breath. Still, such thoughts were merely theory, he had never felt their reality; hence he asked, but with more of assurance than apprehension:

"You think this case may endanger my position in the university?"

"Why, surely—it is bound to," replied Mason, pleased that he had been spared more than the hint. "Consider what you now have on your hands: Wheeling on the verge of a strike which, I believe, try as you will, you will be wholly unable to prevent; secondly, this case against the Saviour Oil Co.; and thirdly, no end of trouble with the Consolidated Gas Co., which is simply a branch of the oil trust. Now then, where does the university get its money? Do you think the oil trust is going to pay *you* for trying to overthrow *them*? Nor does the matter stop there. We read in the *Republican* an editorial one day on the fallacy of public ownership of railways, and the very next day the same newspaper teems with particulars by which one man is about to take under his own control over fifty thousand miles of railways. Moreover, this very man is at the head of that same thieving syndicate that cleared fifteen millions of dollars off of our people in less than two weeks' time on a recent government bond sale. Railroad, oil, bond, university, you perceive the trail of the combination. And yet you deliberately go to work

to fight this thing whilst in the pay of it, and expect to continue drawing your salary! It is nonsense, Kenneth. Give it up, and we'll drop this case against the oil trust just as it stands!"

Recant! Recant! The world would have continued to revolve just the same if it hadn't been for Galileo, as it had for thousands of years in the past and would persist for thousands to come. But why should Truth, which has its bread and butter to earn, be so foolish as to openly defy Falsehood. Verily, the Italian was an ass!

"No, Mr. Mason," answered the young man firmly,—the dreamer, the vapid visionist, the impracticable theorizer, the monkey-browed, short-legged sermonizer and addle-pated disciple of envy and pessimism who pretended to teach economics whilst feathering his own nest,—as the *Republican's* editorial writer was beginning to refer to him,—“No, it is not merely a matter of principle, but one which, I believe, is to determine my whole future career, as showing whether or not the profession which I have adopted can be made an instrument for the service of truth and science, furthering the well-being of society, or whether it must remain, as in the past, a mere prop for plutocracy, a buckle by which to strap the saddle the tighter to the back of struggling humanity. No, I'll fight it to my last breath.”

Mr. Mason got up, walked to the window and looked out without seeing anything. Returning to where Kenneth sat, he placed his hand on his shoulder with a touch that swore to its truth. “By heavens, then, I'm with you! We'll sift this thing to the bottom! We'll give 'em hell! Do you hear?”

Kenneth smiled, rising to his feet as they shook hands; and shortly departed, leaving Mr. Mason scribbling away furiously.

That night he spoke at one of the principal gathering places of the Y. M. C. A., his subject being "Charles Kingsley and the Chartist Movement." Speaking of Parson Lot's fight in behalf of the starving tailors—what time they were mere slaves of the sweat-shop, their clothing in pawn, and barely enough to cover them save for the garment on which they were at work, until the government was forced to establish its own clothing factory at Pimlico—he came at last to notice the substantial difference in the social movement of that time and to-day. "Then," said he, "it rested almost wholly on sentiment, whilst to-day it is based on the arithmetic of economics. Once it was but a question for the heart, now it is for the head, together with the heart, to decide, nay, to compel. Shall we continue to hold it right for man to rob his brother, to possess the power of denying him means to work out his subsistence, and so drive him to despair and often to suicide? Drink, improvidence, ignorance, these three have been the comfortable excuse of the church and the wealthy in the midst of all this poverty and suffering. Yet these three are merely the result, not the cause, of a man's misery. Remember, the poor in general have not that infallible fountain of Lethe, the library, nor the education that goes with it, to which they can always turn and find forgetfulness when discouraged. We seek a book, a novel, usually, written merely to entertain, and lo! the clouds vanish. But they? when come the interminable hours, the mountain-wall of wrong usage, the strike, the starving little ones at home whose necessities grow as their wages sink lower and lower—they turn to drink! drink! drink! They would go mad if they didn't!"

Drawing a circle on the blackboard behind him, he continued: "This is what the labourer produces,

whilst this"—marking off one-quarter of the circle—"is what he is paid. Is it any wonder that he is poor, or is there anyone who will explain to us how this proportion will be appreciably enlarged if the labourer stops drinking, stops being improvident, being ignorant? No; these vast inequalities in society rest not upon temperament, but false economics. Turn your condemnatory glances not upon the sight of starving recipients of charity, but towards those seats where the mighty arrogate to themselves the privilege of dividing this circle, one-fourth of which they fling to the producers, whilst the remainder goes to swell their coffers. Here you will find the cause, and the remedy, for what is falsely so-termed the *profound social question*, the germ of all crime, the factory that grinds out criminals and outcasts by the million. Look to your arithmetic, I say!"

From this point he went on to speak of the evolution of industry in older countries; from the little workshop into the giant manufacturing plant, thence into the trust, and thence into the government. One by one all forms of business were tending that way. In Germany, he explained, twenty years ago they were having the same trouble with their private railroad systems as we are suffering to-day. But Lassalle had taught them, and Bismarck, profiting by his advice, had made the railroads, telephones, telegraphs, express, part and parcel of the government, of society—no longer a hawk to prey upon it. And so in France, Great Britain and her colonies. True, the evolution was slow, but it had taught us what to expect from now on in this country. "There is a difference between capital and the capitalist; the former, being created by society and withheld, belongs to society; the latter is an intolerable nuisance, no more to be borne

and endured than king, priest or other superstitious tyranny. Society can be its own capitalist."

About a week after this, on getting home to dinner late one evening, Mabel handed him a letter. Breaking the seal, an expression of infinite disgust, heightened with anger, swept over his face, as he read it hurriedly and threw it aside.

"What is it?" Mabel asked; but recovering himself quickly, he would say nothing; laughing and jesting throughout the meal. Half an hour later, however, Mabel entered his study and found him pondering over the letter lying open on his desk.

"May I read it, Kenneth?"

"Oh, certainly; if you wish."

She read it aloud. "'My dear Doctor Moore. Your speech at the Y. M. C. A. has caused me a great deal of annoyance. It is hardly safe for me to venture into any of the city clubs. I am pounced upon from all sides. I propose that during the remainder of your connection with the university you exercise great care in public utterances about questions that are agitating the minds of the people. Furthermore, I must insist that you immediately cease all connection with that case pending against the Saviour Oil Co. Truly yours, Ephraim Adams Little, President Rockland University.'"

All Mabel's quick temper was aroused at this injustice. "Poor old Prexy," she mocked; "he can't even go to the clubs for a banquet or a quiet drink with his friends without being pounced upon! Oh, Kenneth, what can a man do in such a world? Don't you see it is hopeless? But you'll drop this case he speaks of, won't you, dear?"

He shook his head. "Don't you know, with the evidence that I have secured, I should be no better than a criminal to step down and out at this stage; neither better nor worse than that liveryman

who was arrested the other day for concealing a gang of men in his haymow whom he knew were wanted by the police to answer to a charge of murder?"

"But we are all criminals, Kenneth," she cried, frowning petulantly, "so what under heavens is the use of a conscience such as yours? Why can't you wink at these things the same as others do? Don't you see that we cannot afford to be honest in accordance to your interpretation? Dear me! it is hard to believe that—that God does these things, creates a man with truth in his heart merely to hurl him pell-mell into the poorhouse. No, no, it must be you who are mistaken, Kenneth! You must be wrong! All the world is against you! You see what Dr. Little hints about the remainder of your connection with the university?"

Yes, he knew it was ominous—more than a threat. "Nevertheless, Mabel, this evidence that I have obtained against the oil company was discovered outside of my position in the university. Now if I can no longer live and act as an honourable citizen of a free republic, bearing my share of its responsibilities and at the same time retaining my connection with the university, why then it merely proves——"

"That you will be discharged—that's what it proves!" declared Mabel. "And then, Kenneth—what can you do then?"

And in spite of his protests Mabel was not convinced. Her wants and expenses being considerable, she could not help feeling that it was her husband's first duty to make it possible for her to live in the way that she had always been accustomed. Other men were able to do this, and Kenneth could surely do the same if he would only stop being so silly about trying to reform society. And thinking of it so, their es-

trangement grew; she seldom attempted to "reason" with him any more, as her Aunt Helen advised, insisting the while that she was "just right!" In fact, all the world seemed to agree with her, to be on her side, save her Uncle Edward, and occasionally Nannette. From Mabel's point of view, a husband's first duty was to support his wife; if he could do this honestly, so much the better; if not, then let him stretch his honour to meet the conditions. In this position she was clearly supported by wise Dr. Griggs: "Men must adapt their moral natures to their environment."

"Do you know," said Nannette in speaking of this to her friend, Mrs. Phillips, "I can't help feeling very sorry for Mabel? She hasn't even the remotest interest in this battle her husband is fighting, yet must share all the discomfort."

"Has he decided to sell their home?"

Nannette nodded. "Sometimes I feel that he doesn't really care very much for her; if he did he could not go on this way; would think more of the consequences of his course as affecting her. Don't you think so?"

Enid glanced up. "He might," she admitted; "but don't you think it would be a misfortune if he did?"

"Y—yes, perhaps it would," Nannette replied, her forehead puckering thoughtfully between her bright little eyes. "Oh dear! what a puzzle it all is, anyway! A man's selfish or domestic interests are in direct conflict with the good of society at large. I don't wonder the professor maintains there is something wrong at the bottom. If a man loves his family and wishes to provide for it liberally, he must say to the public, like Vanderbilt—you know what he said! But if, unfortunately, he

loves the public, is a true Democrat at heart, he must address those same words to his family."

"You think he realises that, Nannette—that he must make this choice?"

"Who, the professor? Oh, yes, of course he does; but you know he thinks it so strange that people can waste their time in prating about Christianity, instead of setting hard at work to alter these economic institutions which make Christianity impossible."

Meanwhile, in reply to Dr. Little's letter, Kenneth had written him on the following day, courteously yet firmly, that whatever evidence he had been able to secure against the oil company was his own affair, the affair of every honest and truth-seeking citizen, and hence had nothing whatever to do with his capacity of professor in a great American university. He was deeply pained to learn that any conduct or expressions of his had served to make club-life in any manner less pleasurable, less stimulating, to the president of the university than had hitherto been the case. Opportunities for the pursuit of the higher life, towards the Over-Soul, were indeed so few in a great city of this sort with its numerous vulgar and worldly claims, that he trusted the president might see fit to withdraw this accusation against him, or at least to be so kind as to accept this reply as ample apology and testimony of his profound regrets. He had no doubt that the president, through his inherent qualities of sweetness and tact and the many cultivated resources of his intellect, would again be able to overcome all obstacles, fatuous pretenders to the throne, and take once more that position at the head of society and club-life for which all his friends were unanimous in claiming that he was divinely appointed.

True, he did not write these words, at least not all of them; but such were the tiny imps of Satan, laughing, threatening, and coaxing by turn, that followed his pen and went capering across his page as he wrote. Still, it was a very polite letter, and after his blotter had rested upon it and his fist travelled across it there were no imps discoverable to the naked eye; at least not to a man whose vanity was so globose and roly-poly as Dr. Little's. Moreover he had stated, briefly, yet with that sentient pen that tells the despair of an enthusiast's love, however hastily or carelessly written, the work that he had *hoped* to do. Merely a glimpse of the young man's soul, but which, nevertheless, caught the scholarly eye of Dr. Little on the instant and gave him a slight twinge at the heart as he wiped his spectacles.

"Ah, why couldn't he have been sensible—why couldn't he! And I had thought that this department of economics was so perfectly balanced! Well, well." He grasped his gold-mounted pen and wrote:—

"My dear Doctor Moore—Your very courteous and kindly communication is just received, and I hasten to assure you that you are to borrow no trouble, no trouble whatsoever, because of any personal discomfort you may have caused me. Such matters, while infinitely annoying at the time, are possibly of not so much importance as we are apt to think—in fact, I am convinced that they are not.

"Regarding your future plans, I had hoped that, as time passed, there would be opportunity for your doing a larger amount of work in the university proper. Instead, however, the doors seem to be closing. I am persuaded that in the long run you can do in another institution, because of the peculiar circumstances here, a better and more

satisfactory work to yourself than you can do here. I am personally very much attached to you. You are, however, man of the world enough to know that, unless one is in the best environment, he cannot work to the best advantage. You are so well-known and your ability so widely recognised, that there will surely be no difficulty in securing for you a good position, one in which you will be monarch, and one in which you will be, above all things else, independent."

Ah, thought Kenneth, as he finished it, is there then no independence even in our universities, and must they confess it thus shamelessly? Why, the greatest opposition that our movement meets on the part of intelligent people is the fear, with work provided for all, that there would then be no independence! Yet where is the independence to-day so far as to the mere extent of right doing? If it is not in the university, then is it in factory, store, or counting-room? Where is the independent man in this home of the free? where the man who dares even to be honest and truth-telling in simple things concerning his or his employer's business? Show him to me—poor fellow! pitiable slave! whether president of college or priest in his pulpit—and I'll show you his shackles. They are forged of gold; placed on his hands by the almighty power of private capital, seeking ever to gratify its own greed! Ah, would the day never dawn when men and women might realise that this truth was not sentiment, nor oratory, demagoguery, but a bald statement of fact for their own well-being.

CHAPTER XVIII.*

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

Early in May Kenneth received notice from Mr. Mason that the case of the State vs. The Saviour Oil Co. would come up for trial at Buffalo on the tenth of the month. For several weeks he had been in correspondence with Abrams' old partner, one John Marks, against whose refinery the conspiracy of the oil trust had been aimed. Marks had been informed that Abrams had been discovered, was repentant, and willing to testify freely as to his connection with the plot to destroy their own refinery in accordance with his purchase by the trust. Would Marks be disposed to assist in this prosecution of the highwaymen and cutthroats who had wrecked his property and ruined his business?

"If Marks does reply that he is ready to stand by us," Mason had said, "it will be almost the only instance in the history of this company's career when any victim has dared to come up boldly and tell the truth. Hitherto they have always been frightened to death or bought off for the merest pittance."

But Marks was not for sale. The doubts that hovered uncomfortably in their minds were quickly dispelled by the vigorous, manly tone of the man's first reply. And when at Buffalo a few weeks later "he stood up to take the oath," to quote from the

* The facts confirmatory of this chapter may be read in the Congressional report on Trusts, 1888, or in Mr. Henry D. Lloyd's "Wealth Against Commonwealth."

New York *World*, "and confronted the men with whom he had been at swords-point for six years, men of unlimited wealth and almost unlimited influence, and controlling the most gigantic monopoly of any age or any country, John Marks looked, as a good observer said, what he proved himself to be, a fighter, who will never know when he is whipped. Hard knocks and a struggle of years against an all-powerful enemy have whitened his hair, and set firm, hard lines about his face. His eyes are deep-set under a protruding forehead and black, bushy lashes, and are dark, firm and searching."

"Your business has been, Mr. Marks?" began the district-attorney.

"The manufacture of oil, sir, for the past fifteen years," he replied; and with the prompting of a question here and there, he proceeded to tell his story in a manner concise and convincing to the jury, of wonderful interest to the spectators, and of infinite jest and merriment to the well-groomed and polished millionaire stock-holders of the trust who sat there blinking and winking among their hired mouth-pieces; the Hon. Potiphar Phillips towering majestically in their midst and lazily roaring out now and then: "I object."

Up to 1873 Marks was a farmer in Wyoming County. At this time he formed the acquaintance of Abrams, who had come to prospect on his farm for oil. Abrams had told him that he was then a stock-holder of the Vacuum Oil Co. of Rochester, but that the trust was getting too powerful for him in that locality and that he should be forced to sell out and go into new territory where the facilities for transportation were not all monopolised by the trust. Accordingly he had gone back to Rochester and worked for some time in the employ of Abrams,

learning the details of oil refining and the mystery of transportation, whereby their rates were suddenly and without notice increased from one hundred to a thousand per cent, and their oil supply very frequently shut off altogether. Then when the Vacuum Co. was sold to the trust, he and Abrams had gone to Buffalo to start an independent refinery.

"Why did you select Buffalo as the site of your industry?" he was asked.

"Because, sir, that city was then a free town. An independent refining company—the Atlas—was then constructing an independent pipe-line from the oil regions to Buffalo. This made Buffalo the best point for establishing refining industries in the country."

"Did your former employers know about your plans when you left them?" he was asked.

"Yes, sir, we told them squarely," he answered, "and the very first question asked was: 'Where are you going to get your oil?' I told him, 'Of the Atlas Co.' 'Humph!' said he, 'you will wake up one of these mornings to find that there is no Atlas Co. — As gentlemen,' he continued, 'I respect you, but as to the Buffalo Lubricating Oil Company I shall do all in my power to injure or destroy you.' "

Marks then explained how in spite of all threats of the trust, with the independent pipe-line to supply them, they had at first been so successful as to cause the price of oil to the public to drop from twelve cents to six cents in Buffalo, and from twenty cents to eight cents in Boston.

"I object!" shouted Potiphar, awaking with a start.

"Your Honour," urged the district attorney, "I am merely proving the ability of this man to make

oil—to show that his ultimate failure did not come from his unfitness.”

The judge nodded, and the district-attorney proceeded.

“How many barrels of lubricating oil could you make in a day, and what was the average profit?”

“Seventy barrels, sir, on an average, at a profit of five dollars a barrel—say three hundred dollars a day.”

“And the cost of your investment?”

“About fifteen thousand dollars, sir, all told.”

A number of other witnesses followed corroborative of Marks' testimony, and finally his former partner, Joe Abrams, took the stand.

He began at the outset of his career, telling the story of his experiences in the oil business in much the same way that he had previously related them to Kenneth, and coming down to his employment and ownership in the Vacuum Oil Co. Hardly had he left their service and become a partner in the Buffalo Lubricating Oil Co. when he was approached by an agent of the Vacuum Co. “Don't you think,” insinuated the emissary, “that it would be better for you to leave these men, Mr. Abrams, and have twenty thousand dollars deposited to your wife's credit than go with these parties?”

“No, sir,” he had answered; “I went with them in good faith, and I propose to stay.”

“But it will only be a matter of a few days with the Buffalo institution at the very furthest,” persisted the agent. “We shall crush them out, and you will lose what little you have got.”

Abrams was then taken into their confidence; they showed him statements proving conclusively that there was no money in oil. “We have other ways of making money, of meeting our dividends, that you know nothing of,” they urged. To make

oil was a great mistake; there was no need of making it, the public didn't buy any, it was merely a superstition on the part of the people to fancy that they or anybody else could make money in such a useless and disgusting occupation. Of course they had to keep their machinery running, the public and the labouring men would make a big fuss if they were to shut down completely, but as to there being any money in it—why it was the greatest delusion of the age, and they opened their books to Abrams to prove it!

They omitted to speak of the year just passed, however, wherein they had paid out three hundred thousand dollars in dividends on a capital of only one hundred thousand. They showed no statement of this. Abrams was gulled as readily as other members of the public. His occupation had been that of a skilled labourer, not an office trickster. The very years of strict, intelligent service which he had devoted to learning and perfecting methods of manufacturing, had been time misspent, according to modern interpretation—he was unfit, couldn't "keep books," as the man who took advantage of him did.

"When did the representatives of the Vacuum Co. next approach you?" he was asked.

He thought a moment, then replied: "It was while we were building the refinery and putting in the stills. There was no one else capable of directing this work but myself, yet at the request of the Vacuum people I travelled from Buffalo to Rochester for another interview, because their threats were beginning to frighten me. It was all the money I had in the world and I couldn't afford to lose it. Their threats almost worried me to death. When I got to Rochester my old employer said to me: 'You have made a great mistake by

going out with those fellows. If you stay with them you will lose all you've got. We are going to commence suit against them, besides serving an injunction against them to stop their work. If you are in there you will be responsible, and lose everything; but if you will come back and work for us we shall make everything satisfactory to you.' Well, I remained in Rochester a day or two and finally went to consult my lawyer, Mr. Trueworthy, about it."

"Wait a moment," interrupted the district-attorney. "Did you go to your lawyer all alone?"

"No, sir, my old employer went with me," replied Abrams, "and he said to my lawyer: 'We have come to see what disposition can be made of Abram's property.' My attorney looked puzzled and I said: 'They are going to bust the company up. I am an endorser on one of its notes, and if I do not come back with the Vacuum, what property and money I have will be taken from me.' My employer then urged Mr. Trueworthy to tell of some way that I could get out of the Buffalo Lubricating Co. After thinking a moment he answered that the only way I could get out was to leave and take the consequences; that if I violated my contract I should be liable for damages as well as debts."

"What did your old employer say to that?" asked the district-attorney.

"Well, sir, he said he knew of another way," answered Abrams; "he asked my attorney: 'Suppose he should arrange the machinery so it would bust up or smash up, what would the consequences be?'"

"Mr. Trueworthy replied that if negligently, carelessly, not purposely done, I should be only civilly liable for damages caused by my negligence; but if

it was wilfully done, there would be a further criminal liability for malicious injury to the property of the company.

"‘You wouldn’t want me, sir,’ I asked, ‘to do anything to lay myself liable?’

"‘But my employer turned to Mr. Trueworthy and said: ‘You have been police-justice, and have had some experience in criminal law. I would like to have you look up the law carefully on that point, and we will see you again.’”

Abrams paused; the district-attorney smiled. "‘Ah, they wanted to keep within the pale of the law, did they? To see about how much crime we can commit? Well, did you see your lawyer again, Mr. Abrams?’”

"‘Yes, sir, after a day or two the two managers of the Vacuum Oil Co. went with me again to Mr. Trueworthy,” continued Abrams. "‘Have you looked up that matter, Mr. Trueworthy?’ they asked.

"‘Yes, I have looked it up,’ he answered.

"‘What do you find out about it?’

"‘My impression has not changed. Such a course would involve him in a criminal liability if he did it on purpose. Everybody who advised or counselled him in such a course would be equally liable with him. The consequences, if you follow that course, would be that you would get into State’s prison. If he is an honest man he won’t think of taking any such action as that. I advise him to keep out of any such thing!’

"‘But the Vacuum people replied: ‘Such things will have to be found out before they can be punished. They will have to find him before they can do anything to him.’” Again the witness paused.

"‘Ah, they expected to get you out of the way,

did they?" said the district-attorney. "Well, what did your lawyer say to that idea?"

Abrams replied squarely, and was then let off for a while. The millionaires breathed themselves for a moment and placed their heads together. Potiphar's face was getting flushed; the thing was going too fast. They must manage to retard matters. Time, which causes people to forget, and witnesses to die or take a trip or change their minds, must be summoned to their aid.

The next witness was Abram's former lawyer, Mr. Trueworthy, who corroborated to the very letter everything that had just been said.

He was dismissed without cross-examination!

The following day Kenneth was called, and gave his testimony regarding his relations with Abrams, and was finally questioned as an expert on purely economic and statistical points that had developed during the trial.

His cross-examination was quite brief. "Is it true, Professor Moore," asked Potiphar in his blindest manner, "that you once stated either publicly or otherwise, that men who conduct their business on the plan of a trust or monopoly, whether in lands, coal, railroads, manufacturing, department-stores or other industry—that such men are no better than highwaymen and deserve to be treated as such by the public?"

"I object!" shouted the district-attorney; "the question is incompetent, irrelevant, and immaterial——"

Kenneth signed to him. "Whether I ever said it or not," he answered clearly, "I will confess that I am utterly unable to see the least difference."

"There!" cried Potiphar; "the intelligent jury will please note that this witness is wholly unsound

—a most dangerous man to our free American institutions!”

That same afternoon Abrams again took the stand and continued his story. After the consultation with his attorney at Rochester he had returned to Buffalo, to find his partner, Marks, greatly alarmed and mystified at his prolonged absence, as without his direction nothing could be done. But when one of the three stills of the refinery had been set up ready for use, the threats of the Vacuum Company again overpowered him. He feared that all his money, the saving of a lifetime, was simply being sunk in this refinery, and he knew that the Vacuum had it in its power, if not through his aid then through some spy in its employ, to so thoroughly wreck or cripple his works as to ruin him outright or bankrupt him by delay. He had not been in the oil business all these years without being fully acquainted with the methods that the trust was in the habit of employing against its competitors. He regretted that he had been so foolish as to venture an independent business. Feeling in this mood, therefore, he took the only course open to him to save himself; the same course that, under the same pressure, ninety-nine business men out of a hundred might not scruple to adopt if constrained to save themselves. Various ways of accomplishing this, all well-known, all dishonest, and all alike equally indifferent to friends, partners, or those who have placed their confidence in them. And all are equally legitimate, equally necessary, equally beautiful, and equally symbolic of a state of social warfare. It is the same society, in fact, that many good people go to bed at night feeling gravely apprehensive over, lest its manifold beauties should be overthrown before they wake up in the morning. “There really are people in the

world, you know," they ominously allege, "who intend actually to overthrow society!"

Abrams, then, returned to Rochester, where he received his instructions from the Vacuum managers; thence back to Buffalo to be ready for the starting of the new refinery. "On that morning," said he, "I weighted down the safety-valve with heavy iron, and packed it with plaster of paris. I then said to the fireman: 'Fire this still as heavy as you possibly can.'"

The fireman complied with his directions; but during the forenoon Abrams went to him and shouted: "Fire this still! I want you to fire this still! Damn it! you ain't got no fire under it!" And he took the shovel himself and threw more coal in, watching it till the fire-box grew cherry red.

Where were the man's eyes fixed at this moment? He had been through explosions before, knew what they meant. He had once carried a dark-lantern into the still-room when superintendent of the Vacuum, and was terribly burned by the explosion. Again he had seen four men burned; as one of them ran to get water with his clothes burning he had set fire to the gas. Flames flashed all about him. "There's hell all around!" he cried. Another time he had seen an explosion from an overheated condensing pipe. The vapor of petroleum spread suddenly over everything; a flash, and men were shrieking and raving mad; their garments were flames; they leapt, they danced, and they sobbed; stalking pillars of fire in a lake of flame. At the hospitals, where the few that were saved had been taken, the flesh came off with their clothes in great chunks, and their eyes were cooked in their sockets. Such scenes were familiar.

But Abrams was not thinking of this, but of the money which he hoped to receive. He, like many

greater men, wished to be numbered among the fittest. He was simply putting his industrial competency to the proof. If the Vacuum people did it, and if the trust behind recommended it, it surely must be a legitimate business turn, which he, a humble workman, could not afford to despise. Of course he never would have been guilty of blowing open an express car out on the plains; that kind of thing was disreputable and several men had been caught and sent to jail for twenty years for such outrages against society. But to blow up a refinery or a million dollar distillery was a comparatively venial affair. Nobody, at least, had ever been punished for it, and probably never would be.

By the end of the week it was evident which way the case was going. Abrams had told of his being spirited away, going first to Rochester, thence to New York and Boston, and finally to California. In all the years of his absence he received from the Vacuum Company over four thousand dollars for which he never did a stroke of work. Nor did the cross-examination serve to accomplish aught save to support the case of the State. The trustees, who sat there listening, grew grave and solemn. Early in the week the trial had been hugely enjoyed by them. The very idea that a great public enterprise such as theirs which represented three hundred millions of dollars should concern itself over the affairs of a little competitor whose value was but fifteen thousand, was a fine piece of humour in itself. It reminded one of the trustees of that impudent tramp who had once scratched a match on the trustee's brown-stone residence. He told the story: "Here, you impudent rascal," said I, "you are spoiling my house. 'Beg pardon, guv'nor,' said he, coolly lighting his pipe, 'your house is spoiling my match.'"

But now matters were getting serious. What was to be done with that testimony of Trueworthy? Why hadn't someone bought him—he surely had a price!

The president of the Saviour Oil Co. was placed on the stand. He was asked if his company was the light of the world, and he modestly said that it was. But when it came to the details of the business his ignorance was amazing. Still a Messiah isn't supposed to be able to explain the miracle of his own creation.

The room grew hot, reporters came in, glanced at the millionaires, and some of them sketched their pictures. What impudence! Just as though they were common criminals! One great fat mass lolled down in his chair, too tired to fan himself, his handkerchief over his features. Then he drew it off and puffed his cheeks out, in lieu of active exercise! As the testimony proceeded, he sank lower and lower in his chair; his turn-down collar was now level with his ears, and in another moment the crown of his bald head was completely swallowed by his shirt band—'twas the veritable ring of Gyges; he was now invisible and could commit all evil with impunity!

When the final argument came Potiphar rose grandly to the occasion. He joked, he geyed and he sobbed; he made everyone feel good-natured. He proved conclusively by his own magnificent acting the superiority of the competitive system in jurisprudence and the advantage of law over justice; coming finally to his peroration with a roar that you could hear all over Buffalo—

"If this man," he shouted, pointing to Abrams, "really did such a thing as to try to cause an explosion of this refinery and at the risk of many precious lives, merely to save a paltry six thousand

dollars, why then, he deserved hanging—nay, lynching! Lynching, I say!”

But when the district-attorney came back at him in due turn, asking, if his witness deserved hanging, then—his case being proved—what was the proper punishment for Potiphar, that worthy had fallen asleep. His work was done. Moreover the question was incompetent, irrelevant, and immaterial.

The jury came in with its verdict, regarding everyone whom the court had allowed them to try—

“Guilty, as found in the indictment!”

CHAPTER XIX.

ENVIRONMENTAL FORCES.

The result of the trial at Buffalo and the almost daily dissensions following left no room for anyone to doubt that the services of Professor Kenneth Moore of the Rockland University must shortly come to an end. Public opinion relative to the course he had taken was largely a matter of conjecture; an occasional open-letter in some newspaper would now and then seem to discover that here and there someone agreed with him. Editorial expression, however, remained vague and inclined to neutrality; the papers naturally would have liked to please their readers, but they must likewise please their stockholders; and unfortunately many of the latter were stockholders in the oil trust. The *Republican*, indeed, had no such scruples in regard to pleasing the public; it had hoodwinked the public so long that it felt no doubt of its ability to continue to do so. “A man like

Professor Moore, who has so long slandered our generous business-men and spoken with contempt of our industrial institutions, should be kicked out without ceremony."

Naturally this sentiment gained ground among that large class of readers who let their newspapers do their thinking for them. Friends turned aside; even old Mr. Ludington looked at him askance. "Give it up, my lad; give it up!" But it was Mabel, manifestly, who took these slights the most to heart. In public she still treated it all with a careless laugh; trampled with scorn his revilers, silenced them with hauteur. "She was proud of her husband; he was a man!" But in secret, kneeling before that sovereign shrine of her chagrin, she would recant with passionate tears: Kenneth was a fool! he was cruel! he was wicked! Why could he not see whither the way was leading, and why did Uncle Edward encourage him when everyone else declared him to be wrong?

Nor were the Erinnyes of their strained affections one whit appeased when, a week or so later, he came to her with gladness in his face and elasticity in his step, and, placing his arm around her waist, said: "It is all right, Mabel. We shall not have to consider expenses. I have sold the house, and rented a cottage in Wildwood."

She was too astonished for anger. How could he affect to be jubilant over this deed!

"Oh, Kenneth," she cried wildly, "I can't see why this should make you happy. To give up all that your father before you, after a life of constant toil and sacrifice, has been able to save, and—and"—yes she would fairly acknowledge it—"with the added sum of your own steady industry from the time you were a mere boy—is this a thing to be glad over?"

He was silent. It was the shipwreck on the bounding tide of his impetuous youth that gave him pause. Had he been sailing all these years to a compass whose hand was false to the magnet of the North? Beneath that narrow horizon wherein one solitary individual moves and is successful or defeated, he had hitherto scarcely paused to peer. One man was but the merest speck in the cosmic scheme, himself among the number, insignificant. That the mass of humanity could in general toil from century to century and have nothing to show for it in the end was a truism, with the reason for which and its every ignoble detail he was vibrant. In two minutes he could explain it to anyone who had the faintest glimmer of a desire for truth in his unawakened soul. He well knew that, so long as society persisted in conducting its industry on a false basis, the declaration in Proverbs: "Seest thou a man diligent in business? he shall be successful," was a hopeless, pitiable lie wherewith to confuse the ignorant and confiding. One man might toil a life time, become a millionaire, and yet go to his grave a pauper despite all his care, diligence and accumulated ability and experience. Such instances were of everyday experience, known to everyone; yet still the blundering world chose to declare that planless, hap-hazard, and warring industry of this sort was better than a regular, orderly and intelligent plan, and moreover that there could be no plan, forsooth, because there had never been any in the Past!

But from the abstract his contemplation had now reached the concrete. He was becoming centered on his own ill-fortunes and those of his immediate acquaintances. After all, this was the great impelling force, this seeking to adapt oneself to one's environment. A short time before, following

Spencer's statement that "no thought, no idea, ever arises save as the result of a physical force," he had said in his lecture-room: "We may readily understand that two hundred years ago the courtier with a brand new velvet cloak, a beautiful feather in his bonnet and a handful of crowns jingling cheerfully in his purse, thought precious little of the divine right of kings—or but to laud it. Not till the tea was taxed too high and the molasses fermented with the germ that lies in oppression, did our forefathers bestir themselves. Nor is it ever till the shoe begins to pinch good and hard, showing that it has become too small for the broad foot of humanity, that comes the hurt, that follows the idea."

From now on he gave up all outside work and confined himself closely to his study and classroom. Here he could honestly take pride. How it pleased him to find that the students were crowding to hear him and that his lecture-room was growing too small! That the basil should blossom at last so luxuriantly in his own little flower-pot whose inhospitable soil had been nourished all these years—aye, for centuries!—with lies, hatred and the refuse of murder, was inexpressibly sweet to him and fraught with a boundless passion of hope and enthusiasm. The light kindled in his eye and his classes caught fire; whilst the sad lines that were beginning to trace their way across the earnest young face relaxed and broke into a smile.

On one morning when the spring sunshine was pouring into the room, lighting the expectant faces round him with a fresher glow, even as the life without was bursting into a newer, greener growth, he had chosen "Environment" as the topic of his lecture.

"All force," he began, "is contained in the en-

vironment. Even that potential energy which we now find residing in an organism, a people, or a nation, was once absorbed, abstracted, from the forces of the environment. Light, heat, gravity, pressure, food, these are forces close at hand and furnishing everyday proof; but no less are we indebted to those more distant forces, the swing of the planets, aye, even the gleam from a star so remote that, were its light to go out to-day, a thousand years must pass ere its force should finally cease to reach and affect us."

He then proceeded to show in a few concise statements how these forces had acted upon organisms in causing evolution; tracing the creature upward, and with a constant reference to the economics of the ascent. "We thus see," said he, "that the environment is constantly changing. Not a moment, not a breath, not a heartbeat, but that period is past forever. Gone are the light and the colour; gone the aim and the day; and gone at last the idea. All are creations of force, and all must change with the constantly changing forces of the environment. In the words of holy George Herbert—

" 'Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky;
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night,
For thou must die.

" 'Sweet rose, whose hue, angry and brave,
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
Thy root is ever in the grave,
And thou must die.'

"I should wish you to bear constantly in your minds this one fact, that everything everywhere changes, that nothing is immutable else there could be no growth; that there is only one law which never changes, and that is the Law of Change.

Knowing this you will not be apt to be deceived when you go out into life and run up against the first political speaker or half-bred attorney who attempts to tell you that human laws should be accepted as being immutable and permanent in the face of all this change. He will doubtless cite you to our Constitution written in the light of one hundred years ago, saying: 'Is it not as perfect to-day as then; does it not meet every requirement of this day?' And you will laugh in his face, knowing well that such a thing as a written constitution, political or religious, is contrary to every law of growth and development. The Constitution must be vested in the people themselves.

"Even so you will laugh at the charge, 'He is changeable; he never says to-day what he said yesterday, and all that he has just said to-day he will contradict to-morrow!' After all, it is only fools prattling of their own folly who will charge you thus, who fail to understand that nothing is eternal save their own ignorance. Aye, let but the organism be impressionable, let him be true to himself, to his own soul, and I care not if he changes as the chameleon, for I am assured that his every change is but a higher expression of the truth that is in him. Whereas, show me a man who never changes, who prides himself upon his constancy, and I will show you a fool with less knowledge of God in his soul than the crumbling rocks along his highway.

"For this reason," he continued, "because of the fact that all growth comes from without, any coupling of a purely coincidental institution with the word 'progress' is to me profoundly distasteful. For instance, 'Progress and Christianity; Progress and Equality; Progress and Inequality; Progress and Slavery; and other meaningless associations,

presumptuous tails tacked on to that kite that soars eternally. For progress we always have—and always shall have. It is inevitable so long as force persists. Hence we might with equal justice say ‘Progress and Marbles,’ or ‘Progress and Football,’ as solemnly to repeat, ‘Progress and Christianity!’ No; growth is from God; not from man, nor his institutions; but in spite of them.”

And when Kenneth said “God” none had a doubt of his meaning. Dr. Little had too frequently referred to him as “that persuasive pantheist.”

Yet there were those who declared that Professor Moore was a pessimist.

He then went on to speak, from the standpoint of biology, of the difficulty attending the growth of a new idea. Beneath an environment where the forces acted constantly upon an individual in *apparently* the same direction day after day, that individual would be slower to change than one on whom those forces had acted neither so long nor so regularly. This required no argument, as common everyday experience had taught us. In biology, this long continuation of forces with but slight change was called *repetition*. By the effect of this repetition, the organism’s, the people’s—the nation’s habits, either in thought or action, tended to become fixed and to move only in a certain direction.

Wherever the effects of repetition had been felt the longest, at that point the organism, the individual or the nation would be the slowest to change, to adopt a new idea. In nature, when the development of a creature was modified by a change in the forces of the environment, the change of forces would produce its effect first upon those parts which are the last to perfect their development. For instance, the lizard’s tail is the last organ to

lose its embryonic character. Now, the appearance of new characters always takes place at definite parts of the body, usually the posterior end, and during development with age passes forwards whilst still newer characters follow after from behind. This fact is recorded by definite marks on the animal's body from the tip of its tail to its head.

Pausing a moment for the force of his illustration to go home, he added earnestly:

"Gentlemen, always keep your eye on the tail of society; thence comes all growth, all impressions, all new ideas!"

His class laughed and cheered. "The rag-tag and bob-tail!"

It was merely a glimpse, a flash that illuminated for a moment the vast range of his subject, with its fulgent force that shot from the spark of the farthest star to the soul of the humblest toiler in the field.

A question was passed him on a slip of paper: "Did you read Professor Thurston's article in the *American* magazine wherein he stated that all growth should come from the head?"

Kenneth laughed. "Yes," he replied, "I read it, and have merely to say that if the professor had remembered but the faintest truth of biology he never would have made such a ridiculous mistake in this matter. For never, never under God's heavens, does growth ever spring from the head! Professor Thurston, I regret to say, deprecated popular education; stated that there should be an aristocracy of learning—if anyone can imagine such a thing—and that education was designed by God for the few and not for the many. Moreover, he deprecated all these 'popular' movements and uprisings in the West, instead of regarding such as

signs. He called us all fools and cranks; he wanted the lizard's tail to stop its lashing—the head was well enough satisfied, there was plenty to eat where it lay! But the tail can't be quiet; under the stimulus of a changing and changed environment it is lashing itself into a fury all over the West. It only remains to be seen whether the head will finally accept these protests, or continue to regard its own tail as a freak."

Other questions followed, from all sides; for a space of five or ten minutes he stood there answering them with a word that suggested. It was nearing the close of his term, or, for aught he knew, of his life; the stimulus that he found and required in work with his class was to end with a day in June; he felt it; his students felt it; they would not let him go.

He read the question: "What is the chief cause of the changes in the forces of the environment in the West?"

"Why, most assuredly," he answered, "'tis the land. The absence of land or its ownership in great tracts by a few, is driving the people pell-mell back into the congested centers of population. Some thirty years ago Bagehot observed: 'It is strange to think how different would have been the fate of this and of coming generations if America and Australia had possessed imperfect but thickly populated civilizations like those of China and India.' It would be interesting to know what Mr. Bagehot would think of the fate of the present generation to-day, with all of this land now beyond the reach of the masses. This question is practically agreed on, the only trouble is the solution. Shall the robbed take back their own?"

Other students were beginning to crowd into the room, young men in shiny black clothes, lean bod-

ies, pinched faces covered with a downy growth, and with a hungry look in their eyes. They belonged to the theological department, and all hoped soon to have a permanent position where they could earn their bread and butter in the alleged service of the Master. They stood there listening to Kenneth's last words:

"Let your observations be wide and your inductions will be true," he was saying. "Base your economics broadly on the fundamental principles of biology, and you will cease to expect anything but a curse to follow a system that makes charity and philanthropy appear noble, penuriousness a virtue, and lying a necessity. Give over your prejudices to the past; anticipate the agrarian Antæus, and with every fresh step you will find new strength. Learn to love life better than the grave, and to dare accept it at its full. It was meant for us. Man alone of all God's creatures can collectively rise superior to his environment and shape its forces to his requirements—not permitting it to damn him and his kind forevermore. Nor will the alms-giving Buddhist ever right these wrongs, neither the crazy Christian with his creeds and superstitions. No, the Star of the East has set forever after humanity has been driven to the borders of the Western sea. It has now turned back; it is on the march. Some of you will lend a hand; some of you will lead it upward; and some of you, I trust, I hope, will be among the chosen to cross the Bifrost and to dwell with Woden in Valhalla."

Again his class cheered him to the echo as he bowed. He was leaving hastily when a hand was laid on his shoulder, and turning, he discovered Dr. Little.

"Ah, professor," said he, shaking his head; "it won't do; I can't have my divinity students dwell-

ing in Valhalla, you know. However"—and he laughed—"I must say that you spoke only the truth. The church has acted shamefully and must be taught to look upon humanity from the standpoint of economics. But you know how it is, professor—you know we can't do anything. We can't speak as we believe and feel! But ah," and the president laid his hand on Kenneth's shoulder, "when I hear you speak sometimes it makes me fairly envious of your age, your fearlessness, your independence! You, at least, can do whatever you please and know to be right. A most fortunate position, Professor Moore—a most fortunate one!"

Was he joking or serious? After having already given him warning that his services should not be required another year, could the president who drew a ten thousand dollar salary really be envious of one who was shortly to be turned adrift without means, without promise, almost without hope?

He passed out, and crossed the quadrangle. A street musician, an old man with long white hair, and face that peered yearningly into his own as he came up was grinding out the *Marseillaise*. How forlorn it sounded at that time and place! Almost as the echo of his own futile words. He paused. Ah, it was the same old fellow who had piped so merrily for them last winter—Spanish Pete.

He handed him a quarter. "Come and see me some time," he said kindly.

The old man removed his hat, his face beamed: "*Gracias, senor.*" That bow might have graced a minuet—perhaps even it had.

Kenneth walked on slowly. Are men, after all, so much better than the institutions they represent? he found himself asking. He may have been thinking of the university or the hand-organ, the

president or Spanish Pete. The institution did not matter in dealing with a query of this kind. Poor old Prexy! he laughed softly; he is well tipped for his music, yet he feels the pressure and bows with servility to the self-same master that rules the organ-grinder. On the whole, I prefer and honour the latter. He at least pretends to no more than he is. There's no affectation of religion about him.

CHAPTER XX.

MOMENTOUS OCCASIONS.

When the time came for giving up their home and moving to Wildwood, Nannette had forsaken them and gone to live with Mrs. Phillips. I should only be a nuisance, Mabel," she had said; "your work will be so much lighter without 'the boarder,' don't you think so?" Though Mabel had answered candidly that, if she meant housework, she didn't propose to bother herself with that. Still, she had preferred not to urge her.

After establishing themselves in their new home, therefore, Mabel had directly fallen into the way of being absent the greater part of the day and well on into the evening; but which occasioned little comment from her husband, as he knew her to be absorbed in her music and the various social and charitable demands that were unavoidable with her rising popularity as a singer. And in truth he had admired her the more for this very independence; so much, indeed, as to congratulate her, once, but to his immediate regret. For she had resented it, briefly, strangely—or so it seemed to him; with

sundry implications, pantomimic yet cutting, none too pleasant for a man in his position to recall.

They now lived so far out that few of their old friends came to see them, save for Nannette and Enid, accompanied on occasion by the O. G. Goldsmith-Smith Publishing Co. Sometimes they drove, but more frequently came on wheels, in obedience to the whims and commands of Nannette.

"By Jove!" Oliver had said to Kent, "it's a bad thing for us, the summer coming on so soon. *She* won't have any copy for us now till next winter. You'll see." Accordingly he had set to work to try and make the best of a bad matter, spending as many of his evenings at Mrs. Phillips, as he could well spare. "Yes, I quite agree with you, Miss Nielsen, it is really too warm for literary work, you know."

And entering his office late in the afternoon one day at this period, he had ordered: "Sam, I wish you would write to some of those famous individuals whose manuscripts are piled up over there and tell them frankly that we really cannot use matter of that kind. Thank them for their courtesy, of course, and tell them that we appreciate the fact of there being something 'ominously flattering'—as Whistler has it—in this—er, occasion of their submitting to us, a young Western publishing-house, these latest products of their pens, these ripest clusters plucked from the vines of Parnassus whilst standing with hands up-stretched on the peaks of their towering Egos. But that, in consideration of our readers, we have made it an invariable rule not to publish anything more that is not of some discoverable human interest. Therefore, whilst the conversation and happenings of snobs in London and New York, Rudolphins in Ruritania, and of elephants and tigers in India, may possibly be of

interest in some parts of the world, we must repeat that in the midst of our stirring life and as a mere question of geography if not of literature, we regret to find their manuscripts unavailable."

Sam smiled and wrote on. "I'm afraid, Oliver," he returned, "that you are beginning to draw the lines a little too close, aren't you? Some of those authors will declare you are becoming a pessimist—I believe that's what they call a man nowadays who wants things better."

"Well, it makes no difference; we're through with that kind of stuff; if they think they can crowd that effete material through our press at this stage of the game, why— But by Jove, old man! when I think of how near we came to going to pieces it just makes me wake up in the night and shudder. For honestly, you know, at the start we really had no more chance for success than those thousands of other small publishing firms whose sole capital consists of an unlimited stock of predatory politeness and a well-oiled typewriter. It's all your work, Sam; I shall never forget it. By the way, I read that article of Moore's in the *Sun* on 'Environmental Forces in Literature.' It was great; I quite agree with him. What a queer chap he is for biology! Goes back to the beginning and traces down our every instinct. When a lover kisses his sweetheart, he avers, it is merely the old, old effort of the moner to swallow his mate. Ha! that's rich! though I used to think with Keats: 'Do not all charms fly at the mere touch of cold philosophy?'"

Which would indicate that Oliver also had become somewhat infested with the views of Professor Moore, and in consequence of which the business of the O. G. Goldsmith-Smith Publishing Co. had been amazing some of the other houses. Beginning

with the *Desert Isle*, other new writers had appeared and set the fresher impress of their lives against that artful dodger of our day and generation—the writer with a name. The result had left no room for further misgivings.

“Now I’ll just tell you what it is, old man,” Oliver continued oracularly, “when an author has once written a true book, a book that has fully reflected himself up to the moment of going to press, then he has done his work and would better keep silent; for several years, at least, or until something happens to him.”

“A good idea, Oliver; but do you really think anything ever will happen to them?” Sam asked, in accents of profound hopelessness.

“Humph! the Lord knows—some of them. Fancy anything ever happening to this author!” He held up a manuscript he was in the process of wrapping. “But if some of these fellows, who persist in writing half a dozen novels a year——” He bit the end of his cigar savagely.

“Yes, I know,” Sam sighed, “only don’t take it to heart so; they are quite irrepressible.” He inserted an unavailable slip and wrapped up a manuscript on his desk. “I presume this man will be surprised at our impudence.”

“Who is it?”

“Oh, it’s that—Sh! I’ll whisper it to you in the elevator. Somebody might have a phonograph in our key-hole, you know.”

Oliver laughed, stepping over and glancing at the address. “Ah, yes, I read it. Now isn’t that awful, awful! Why, it’s nothing less than a case of mental and moral suicide, and not satisfied with that he sends the infant here to us pretending it to be viable and attempts to get our money under false pretences.”

"Yes, the man certainly ought to get six months hard," and Sam drew the string taut and tied the knot very tight. "One of the most atrocious criminals of the age."

"Oliver whistled softly a fragment of that popular song, "And There Are Others," and continued: "However, we're doing a noble work for humanity. We're doing our best to give them a decent burial and bringing worthier men to the light as fast as possible. But pshaw! what's the use? Now this one, it's called *The Week's Work*, will go right straight over to McBugle and Dunn's and Colonel Slauson will blow his trumpet and declare it to be the very best work of its author and one of the greatest masterpieces of the age. Confound him! I think a term would do him good, too."

He cleaned up the correspondence on his desk, picked up his coat and hat, and with a commendatory "Keep at it, old man; I'm going over to the printer's—back in about an hour," he hurried out.

And the "old man" kept at it. A dozen more manuscripts were wrapped and tied, a letter written to their respective authors in that beautiful rounded hand of his, couched in terms appropriate only to select readers, and which all who saw them agreed that the O. G. Goldsmith-Smith Publishing Co. was wholly unique and peculiar—"Damn peculiar," some even asseverated.

In the midst of his pleasant and sacred occupation he was interrupted by the rustle of skirts and a draught of cold air. "Ah, Mrs. Phillips—Miss Nielsen," he cried cordially, as he rose and took their hands; "delighted to see you, only please do come away from that desk. I've been sitting there all day. Here, take these seats."

"Ah, but I thought you never left it any more,

Mr. Kent," said Enid, as they sat in the window whence they could look far out over the tops of the city and the lake beyond. "We've scarcely seen you for a month past."

He explained; he had been unusually busy—the summer trade.

"But where's Mr. Goldsmith-Smith?" she asked.

"Oh, yes, where's Oliver? I want to see him," echoed Nannette.

Ah, was she learning to call him already by that most familiar and tenderest of his varied names? It seemed so, and somehow it gave him a peculiar and most unusual sensation, reminding him forcibly of the way he had felt one night several weeks ago when coming away from a call on Nannette, and Oliver had confessed to him suddenly as the door shut behind: "Hang it all, Sam, I believe I'm in love." Whereat Sam had caught his breath sharply and replied vaguely: "Oh, is that all? Well, I—I'd be quite sure of it, Oliver, if I were you." Afterwards he had been very busy.

"He's gone over to the printer's," Sam replied. "I think he'll be back shortly if nothing—er—happens to him; if he doesn't get caught in the machinery."

He looked at Nannette. She did not appear to be greatly alarmed.

"Oh dear, how provoking!" said she.

"Yes, so it would, so it would," he admitted.

Enid laughed. Was he never to confess himself, she wondered.

"Oh, of course I don't mean that," Nannette objected. "But I wanted to see him—I called on business."

Sam was amazed, but incredulous. He knew she hadn't been doing any work lately, or at least not to his knowledge. He scanned her closely; a

pretty parable in cream, jet stars, and red edges, an *edition de luxe*. How one edition of her just as she stood would take for the summer season!

"In that case," he suggested, "if it is a matter of business, perhaps—or no, I forgot."

"Forgot! Why, what do you mean?"

He refused to explain. "We've made a new rule," said he, "and I don't think I can help you."

"O dear! You are always making new rules, Mr. Kent, and you know you could help me so much if you would," she persisted. "The only reason I didn't speak to you was because I didn't dare; you are so severe in your judgment."

Hm! She had come there then intending to hoodwink Oliver. It was fortunate the young man was out.

"My dear—er——"

She smiled.

"Young woman!" he ended severely. "If you knew what sacred duty I was engaged in when you entered you wouldn't think of submitting any more of *your* work to us."

"But what on earth have I done," she cried—"No, what under heavens were you doing, Mr. Kent?"

He replied ruthlessly—might as well have it over with. "You see those manuscripts on my desk over there?" he demanded.

She turned, glanced, and nodded her head; saucily, however; 'twas an old trick—they could not fool her that way again.

"Young woman! Every one of them is the latest work of distinguished authors at home and in England. They are all refused."

"My goodness! Are you going out of business, Mr. Kent?"

Enid gasped. It was dazzling, bold, but benefi-

cent. A little over a year ago, she remembered, they had been begging for manuscripts from those individuals, and now they were found unavailable. Being privileged, she glanced at the addresses, and laughed immoderately.

"No, we are not going out of business, Miss Nielsen," Sam condescended, "but Mr. Goldsmith-Smith has lately found that when an author has once become famous,"—and he explained to her in detail. "There is no help for you until something *happens* to you."

"Oh, what nonsense! Mr. Kent." She was not lightly subdued. "Why, you can't imagine how much has happened to me in a year."

"Oh yes I can," Sam admitted mournfully, "I have no doubt a great deal has happened, but it might not be interesting." And reflecting a moment, he added: "Besides, it is merely conventional."

Was he speaking seriously; was he taking this way of admonishing her that she had not been true to herself and her art? With a moué that mocked whilst beseeching, her glance fell.

"I am sorry," she said simply; "it has all been so fresh and inviting—here. But I am sorry I have disappointed you."

About a week later Oliver came into the office and after opening his desk, he remarked: "Sam, I saw Miss Nielsen last night."

"Did you? That was nice," Sam agreed.

"Yes, oh yes. But, I say, old man, you broke her all up. She says you refused to publish any more of her work."

"Oh, no, I'm afraid she misunderstood me. I merely explained our new rule."

"Of course. But hang it all, Sam, you know there are exceptions to——"

"Oliver," said Sam solemnly, "Oliver, so long as the critic's eye is lucent and not jaundiced with sentiment the rules of art can have no exceptions. It is the brain, the God-like organ, that sees clearly at all times save when the sickly sentiment of the heart overcasts its vision. Look! As we gaze through the bare trees in November it needs little to warn us that winter has begun, despite the coquetting pleasureless sunshine."

Smith started. What in the devil did he mean? However, he objected.

"Oh, I say now, Sam, don't be an idiot. You know you sat up too late last night at Mrs. Brady's and I tell you *that* jaundices the eye, too, quite as much as anything else. I don't know what's come over you—you've been going all to pieces lately, and it's all because you don't go out enough. Quit it, Sam, quit it! Confound it all, you're losing part of your life—you're getting old!"

Sam stopped work and looked up. "Yes," he admitted slowly, running his hand through his hair, "that's so, Oliver, and I suppose I do begin to look pretty ancient and——"

"Oh, shut up, Sam! you know I didn't mean that, quite. No one would ever take you to be more than——" he stopped suddenly.

Sam besought him to say the worst.

"Well, I was only going to say that no one—no one who knows you, you know—would take you to be—well, twenty-five."

Sam smiled. "No, I suppose not." It was certainly very courteous in Oliver to put it that way. No man of his position wanted to be mistaken for a kid of twenty-five. It would ruin the circulation of the *Sun*—cause a spot to cool in its center. And yet—there might still be times when that age would be very convenient and attractive. Having contin-

ued to go in society year after year only to find that there was absolutely no variety, now when all women were ceasing to look quite alike to him, he was getting old.

"You think, then, Oliver," he began gropingly, "that if I only take care of myself awhile I might pass for——"

"Oh, yes; don't speak of that! Don't I always see that your coat fits you and your ties are correct?"

What more could even Methuselah want! Under the generous tutelage of Mr. Goldsmith-Smith he was good for a thousand years at the least. Sam had seen men of that kind in the clubs; of any age, sixty, eighty, one-hundred, blasé and suave as a mummy, moving serene amid the alien younglings.

O glorious vista, with its perennial I came, I saw, and I conquered! he sighed, softly.

"But now look here," cried Oliver, again coming to the attack, "*she* wants to publish another book, you know."

"Yes, I believe she said so, Oliver."

"Well, you needn't have acted that way about it. A person should show a little deference, a little discretion, when dealing with a—well, with a genius. She isn't subject to our rules, quite. Besides it's not a recent work but an old one."

Sam subsided. "Humph! there might be some chance for that," he admitted reflectively, "I presume it was written before the *Desert Isle*, then? Well, tell her to send it in and I'll read it."

Oliver came over, put his hand on Sam's shoulder and said solemnly: "Sam, don't be a fool! Can't you ever see through anything? Why, you've read it already. It's the *Rhapsodist*, man! The *Rhapsodist*!"

"The devil!—But you don't mean it, Oliver? Now stop acting that way and be sensible. Why didn't she tell me?"

"Tell you!" cried Oliver indignantly. "Why, you never gave her a chance—you just came right out flat-footed and declared that hereafter she was laid on the shelf. But that's always the way with men of your profession; you get too narrow and—well, confoundedly obtuse! However, she's the author of *The Rhapsodist*, and is going to revise and publish it again. By the way, she explained why she didn't first come to us with the *Desert Isle*—before going everywhere else. She felt, somehow, that we hadn't done right with her first book. It's strange how an author will feel that way, isn't it?"

Sam paced up and down, lost in meditation and surprise, wondering how the similarity could have escaped him. Yet her first story was written with a pen—and he had felt sure it was a woman's hand from the first—whilst her later story was typewritten, sexless and impersonal, and between these two styles of manuscripts there is such a vast difference as to confuse the ablest of readers and suggest no sign of a sisterhood; this is read in whole pages, at a glance; whilst that is studied in blots, and dashes, and curses—silurian traces, persistent and elusive, in the very face of our modern civilization. Some day, when poverty had ceased to make savages of us all, the O. G. Goldsmith-Smith Publishing Co. was going to give typewriters to all its authors—or rather, as a premium to all who would promise to write a book not oftener than once in two years.

"Did you hear what I said, Sam? She's going to revise it."

He paused. "Oh, no; don't let her do that. It's

perfect just as it stands—it would be only a waste of her time and our money in new plates. All it needs to make it go like one of—I mean like any celebrated author's work, is simply to put her name on it."

"Yes, I told her that," Oliver answered ingenuously, "but she wants to change it."

"Pshaw! don't let her, Oliver, I love that book. Don't let her spoil it."

"Well, then, go and see her about it yourself, Sam. I can't do anything with her, although I was just like that—didn't want it changed, you know. But what in the devil can I do? She won't come here, and you won't go there, and she's dead set on that plan of hers of changing the plot—marrying off the 'rhapsodist.'"

"Marrying him? Good heavens!"

"Yes, that's right," Oliver agreed. "Isn't she crazy? Now who would ever think of such a thing?"

Alas, Sam thought of it! It haunted him the rest of that day and went home to Mrs. Brady's with him at night, and many nights thereafter. For by what strange divination had this girl out on an Iowa farm stolen the secret of his solitude, taken the bare warp of his life and woven into it the woof of her own golden spinning until even to himself, as he sat in his chair turning the panoramic pages, it was as though he lived again that decade, read the dreamer in the dreamed. Yet she thought to improve things, he mused whilst his lamp burned low, if she married the rhapsodist. Strange she should think of that! And as for Oliver, he had confessed it would spoil it—and he loves her. Ah, one knew it would be that way, could tell it from the first. Oliver was young yet; yes, Oliver was quite young; but he was improving, and his prospects—well, his prospects were certainly splendid.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE STRIKE AT WHEELING.

It was the middle of June, and Kenneth's lectures at the university were coming to a close; this, moreover, without any position in sight for the coming year. The fact worried him more than he would confess. Once indeed he had gone to Mr. Ludington to ask if there was not some business in which the old gentleman's influence would serve to obtain him a position. "I want no more school-teaching," he had declared, "in schools that are controlled by private capital. I should prefer to be a clerk, anything, at which I can derive a mere living till I can get a book or two written and published." But the old gentleman had shaken his head unfavourably; all his money at present, he explained, was invested in banking. "I—I really don't fancy you would like that work, would you, Kenneth?"

"Oh, well, Uncle Amos; it's as honest as anything nowadays, I suppose. I really can't blame a man for taking usury—in this year of our Lord."

Mr. Ludington smiled. "Well, if you wish, later, perhaps, I will give you letters to some of the banks." And as Kenneth went away he murmured: "Poor lad! we're all thieves and rogues in his sight. Surely, a strange monomania!"

Meanwhile the troubles at Wheeling were growing more threatening as the warm weather came on, and the workmen need fear no longer the inclemency of nature added to that of man. In a few of the churches throughout the city the condition of the workmen at Wheeling became the subject of

frequent condemnation; some pastors, indeed, lost their pulpits in consequence. Rich men who supported churches, and owned stock in the Wheeling Co. and similar institutions, quite naturally objected to being referred to from the pulpit as a set of social banditti. This wasn't what the church was for! Let the preacher dilate on the horrors of improvidence, ignorance, drunkenness, christianised by the blessings of charity and philanthropy and sanctified with the time-honoured law, "The poor ye have always with you!" This was the kind of preacher they supposed they had hired. Yet in one such church, gifted with a too-intelligent pastor, Kenneth had one night been asked to speak on the so-called profound labour problem at Wheeling; and being in his usual vein, his words doubtless implied added discomfort to the already well-nigh intolerable club-life of President Little.

That same night as he reached home Mabel handed him a telegram. He noticed carelessly that she had already opened it. "Has it been waiting long?" he asked, reading it quietly.

"About two hours, I should think."

"And you read it—you know what it is? Really, Mabel, I should think you might have——"

"But you won't go, will you?" she cried contemptuously.

"Certainly. It's from Holden. 'Come to Wheeling at once. Men determined to go out.' Good-by. I shall catch the eleven o'clock train."

"Wait! O Kenneth! I think it's simply disgraceful!"

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"This," she cried, "this strike! Your meddling with the affairs of those men. Why, you never seem to think of me—how unpleasant it makes it

everywhere. I do wish you would give it up, once for all!"

He glanced at his watch; he had ten minutes to catch his train. "Do you mean, Mabel, that people don't treat you well?"

"No; they don't. I can't begin to tell you how mean and disagreeable some people can be! I tell you I am thoroughly sick of it all. I can't stand it!"

He stood a moment, thoughtfully, scarce knowing how to reply. "Yes, I know—I know," he began vaguely; "I can realise that it has been uncomfortable for you. Women, who derive an obvious pleasure from torturing their kind, find delight in hurting you for something I may have said affecting their husbands' inordinate greed and ambition. Such work necessarily has its unpleasant features; I do not enjoy its ostracism, Mabel, any more than you——"

"But it wouldn't be so bad, Kenneth, at least I shouldn't feel it so," she broke in, "if the people whose interests you are working for were our own kind; but they are not, you know they are not! On the contrary you are fighting against your very best friends, life-long acquaintances; and all in favour of a lot of ignorant working-men, tramps, men wholly unable to appreciate you and that may any moment turn against you. Don't you see what folly it is?"

He smiled sadly, whereat she flushed angrily and turned away: "Oh, that's always the way you take it! I often think you care more for those men than for me."

"No, no; I beg your pardon, Mabel," he protested; "your argument struck me—involved a principle in biology, class against class, you see. Still"—and again he glanced at his watch hurried-

ly, "my heart is all with that class, whether they be our own kind or not. I hate an aristocratic thief!"

She deigned no reply. Seating herself at the piano she began to prelude a familiar German ballad. Somewhat of passionate resentment in its tones surprised him, moved him strangely beyond its wont. Pausing a moment, he came over to where she sat and touched her lightly on the shoulder.

"Mabel, I must go. Won't you say good-by?"

A note more of love might have conquered them both. Why was it not forthcoming?

Her eyelids drooped slightly—that was all. The passionate prelude rolled on. It might have been the echo of her heart.

Stooping, he kissed her on the forehead, and hastened out.

The town of Wheeling was aglow with electric light as he stepped off the train; streets were quiet and deserted, the hand of the town clock in the main factory building pointing a quarter past the hour of eleven. What a palace of industry it was! Surely, if Mr. Wheeling had done nothing else he at least deserved the thanks of the world for showing that manufacturing enterprise need not necessarily be confined to districts whose outward squalor offends the senses. The wand of Circe was no less potent to-day than in the past; confine workmen within miserable sties and the environment soon completed the mental and physical degeneracy. To this extent the town was a wonderful advance, a brilliant illustration; but ah, even here something had gone wrong, had been overlooked in the plans and specifications. The city clergy maintained that "it was merely another instance of total depravity in man;" the *Republican*, "the work

of demagogues;" the average college professor, "the effect of too much education among the masses." "Is not this a most lamentable thing that the skin of an innocent lamb should be made parchment? that parchment being scribbled o'er, should undo a man?"

But what was the worm in the bud? Merely this: "If you put a chain around the neck of a slave, the other end fastens itself around your own. Bad counsel confounds the adviser." Both chain and advice in this case were plainly the unbridled profit-system. No system of robbery had yet been discovered that could be considered truly beneficent, however polite or suave be the robber, or whatever the price rebated to his own soul and his church pew.

Proceeding straight to Holden's residence, Kenneth waited but a second for the doctor to step into his coat and together they were off to the town-hall where the workmen were holding a mass meeting. "It's come at last," the doctor observed grimly as they walked along. "Some nine or ten families were evicted this evening because they couldn't pay their rent. There's that man Harvey, for instance—you remember him; he paid fourteen dollars and a half rent, seventy-nine cents for water, and had left only seventy-one cents a day on which to feed and clothe himself, wife, and four children. Last fall his wages were cut, his child was taken sick and he ran behind in his rent. To-night his family is out on the sidewalk."

"Platitudes, doctor, mere platitudes; the world has heard the like these thousands of years. I tell you our cause has nothing to gain and everything to lose by invoking pity rather than justice."

"Yes, yes; you're right, of course. But my God! a man can't stand everything. His love for his

kind, his offspring, is as strong as ever. The workingman hasn't got beyond sentiment, even if the heartless world has."

And the doctor spoke truly, for as they entered the hall it required but a glance to catch the argument of the evening. Long hours, cut in wages, nine millions of profits for the company last year and our families starving to death. A man was speaking from a platform: "Look round you," he said, "and lo! the farmers are destroying their crops, the manufacturer cannot sell his clothing, his shoes; the capitalists tell us there's an overproduction, and we, who help to produce all this wealth for others, are in want of the barest necessities. We are starving, they tell us, because there is too much!"

(A flood in China destroyed five thousand people,—yesterday, the day before, 'tis no matter; we read about it in the morning paper with like interest. Let the floods continue; there is no lack of Chinamen!)

The speaker continued; the note of Moses was on his lips and he was addressing the children of Israel; the Philistines were in front, and behind them stood the periphrastic Pharaoh. All the first-born were to be murdered—and the second-born, too, for that matter. Naught was said of the Red Sea, the vast army of unemployed lying in wait for their positions the moment they walked out—God would be on hand to take care of the Red Sea after they got to it. Only break their fetters, loosen their thongs, everlastingly quit making bricks without straw. "We'll teach them that the slave is equal to his master, that labour is not a commodity, that human life is to be considered above profits; there is justice and sympathy for us in the hearts of the masses. Therefore: 'Strike! Strike! Strike!'"

The cry was taken up, swept out of the room; a warm blast on the cold without, clamorous of the revolt in hell—and as futile.

Others spoke in the same strain; the time sped; more harrowing incidents of slavery and starvation were dragged forth. Some of the Chinamen drowned in the flood were even identified, it is claimed!

But on one thing their unanimity was vociferous, calling on high heaven to bear witness; namely, there was to be no violence.

Oh, no; no violence; they were only going to strike. They were going to strike in order to bring their employers to their knees. If necessary to win their cause they were going to starve to death like *gentlemen*, peaceably, contentedly, and decently, within their own houses, sending proper notification to the undertaker and ordering a respectable but inexpensive funeral, thus saving the Wheeling Company any needless expense and worry over a coroner's inquest. Their magnanimity over minor details was amazing, altitudinous. It is the way with grand souls. Surely God would watch over and be near them!

Holden spoke, and Kenneth followed him. Being well-known and well-liked he was greeted with cheers and at first listened to intently. But the tide was too strong for him. Attempting to remind them of the absolute folly and hopelessness of a strike, he was cautioned with a hiss from a far corner. "He's been bought!" came the voice after it.

"It's a lie!" he cried, flaming up, and nailing his glance on the person who had uttered it. And lo! as he did so, he discovered a familiar face beside it. That face was Potiphar's!

Cheers, and cries of "Put him out!" directed against his accuser, restored his equanimity and he

continued. But no, they were respectful, but determined. What though he told them that for every man who walked out there were ten waiting to take his place; that every strike, almost, had been a failure; that a strike without violence was unknown—did these defeats lessen the justice of their claims, after all? He might remind them that the winter was none too far off, that cold, hunger and nakedness would follow them hither and thither in the vain search for employment afterwards. “There are comfortable prisons for the criminal, palaces for the insane, poor-farms for the hopelessly incompetent, but for an able-bodied man seeking work at living wages there is no home, no refuge, not even a warm cell! The regulars will be called out, you will stone them, revile them, curse them; but three years from now such of you as are able to stand the physical examination will be in their very ranks, perhaps called out to suppress a strike and help shoot your former fellows down. The regular army always fills up after a strike. Men hate it; but it is their last resort. It’s the devil’s own trick—you know it!”

The clock in the tower was striking twelve. He paused, the men were listening; each stroke was a century, each echo the groping years. It is hard not to cry out to heaven, hard to those of us who realise the cause of our distress in the day of our fullest desire. How slow are the strokes! Strike! strike! strike! Rebellion, reform, renaissance. Christ! how slow it is! yet the pendulum still swings on.

The factory whistle followed the last stroke, and the next moment the hall was deserted, the men tumbling out to join the strikers from the works. Five thousand, all told, thronging the streets, congregated around bonfires of dry-goods

boxes and discussing plans for action. No one thought of going home, there being an expectant note in the atmosphere that something decisive might even occur before morning.

"I have a call to make, Kenneth," said Holden; "you may as well come with me. We can be back in half an hour."

Together they passed down street after street of red brick houses, neat and pleasant without, but all poverty-stricken within. "The woman who lives here had twins yesterday," the doctor explained, as they stopped and rang a doorbell. "If you'll sit in the front room and wait a moment I'll see how the family is doing."

He complied; sitting there in the dark, save for the light from the room beyond, where the doctor could be seen at the bedside of the woman, who had two great bundles wrapped up on each side of her, whence arose a squall anon suggestive of warmth, comfort, and good living that brought a smile to the mother's face. Three small cot-beds occupied by the same number of small children were placed within stumbling distance, the gentle breathing indicative of peace and quiet slumber and a disposition to accept the world as it came. All this happiness, Kenneth reflected, at a cost of only seventy-one cents per day, according to the estimate carefully made by the directors of the Wheeling Company.

"This is the way America is being peopled for us at present," the doctor observed as they went out. "My classmates who settled in wealthy districts in the city tell me they have but three or four baby cases in a year. I have that many every week. It's a bad thing in these times, too."

The warning of Matthew was in his words: "And

woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days."

"Have you considered it—I mean from a sociological standpoint?" Kenneth asked thoughtfully.

"Yes, I have had to," the doctor answered. "Of course that nonsensical notion of Malthus' that the means of subsistence increases only at an arithmetical ratio, whilst population increases at a geometrical ratio—unless prevented by warring circumstances, is too idiotic almost to be considered."

The professor agreed, remarking that such an idea, if it ever carried any weight, had been thoroughly exploded. We had no evidence whatever to prove that the world's population has ever increased, whereas we knew that the means of subsistence had increased a thousand-fold. "Poverty and starvation continue because the mighty choose to have it so, not because the world cannot amply provide for the subsistence of every man, woman and child."

"As for that matter of birth-rate," Holden resumed, "I have felt that if our labouring men were paid the wages they honestly earned, so that the race in general could cease to grovel and aspire to something higher, then, I believe, we should need have no fears of overpopulation. In a word, make it possible for men to cease living like animals, and they will cease to breed like animals. Everyday experience and the commonest facts of biology go to prove this, I should think."

Some one was addressing the crowd as they returned; the speaker mounted on a box, his voice high pitched and excited, and his gestures threatening dire violence to any one so foolish as to disagree with all that he said. But curiously enough, Kenneth thought, the crowd seemed strangely unresponsive; on their faces, lit up by the glow of the

bonfire, he read not only disapproval, but amused disgust. After listening a moment he turned to Holden in amazement. "Who under the heavens is this fellow—and what is he trying to say?"

Holden smiled. "Don't you recognise him, then? He's the man that accused you this evening of being bought. Didn't you discover Mr. Potiphar Phillips at his side?"

Kenneth started. "Ah, so that is the way they will try to win! What is the rascal's name?"

"Medill, I believe—Jim Medill. He's a professional agitator; makes a good living by inciting workmen to strike, to do damage, and then selling out to the employers. He's done it so often that both employer and employed have absolute confidence in him. Potiphar, you observe, merely assists him a trifle; prompts his vocabulary now and then."

Again Kenneth listened, with growing wonder and amusement. Potiphar's face was flushed, his manner a trifle too eager, and from what he knew of him he conjectured that drink was the cause. He began to wish that Medill would stop and let Potiphar speak for himself. For, despite his contempt for him as a man, there was a certain power and fascination in him that he always felt; one of those naturally gifted orators, moreover, whom simply to hear was to feel more than half convinced notwithstanding one's better judgment. For on occasion, as everyone knew, Potiphar could roar like a lion at bay, stand on his hind legs and lash his tail, and deliver a cuff that would knock justice into absolute insensibility for weeks; then anon he could be gentle as a kitten, smooth as satin, smug as a statute. Seeing him now, Kenneth suddenly recalled that famous defense of his in the whiskey-trust trial wherein it had been proved, by testi-

mony that was absolutely incontrovertible, that the trust had bribed a United States gauger to blow up a rival distillery and one-hundred-and-fifty men at work there, by means of an infernal machine. Everyone now knows the facts. In April, 1888, the Chicago distillery firm published that they had captured a spy of the trust in their works. He gave them a confession in writing. Later a valve in the distillery was found to be tampered with in such a way as to cause an explosion had it not been discovered in time. The distillery firm made known the fact that they had been offered one million dollars by the trust for their works, which they declined. In December the country was startled by the news that this distillery had been the scene of an awful explosion of dynamite; all the buildings in the vicinity were shaken and many panes of glass broken. A jagged hole three feet square was torn in the roof. There were fifteen hundred barrels of whiskey stored under the roof that was torn open; had these been ignited a terrible fire would have been added to the effect of the explosion. A package of dynamite which had failed to explode, though the fuse had been lighted, was found on the premises by the Chicago police.*

The evidence was all in; the people waited, breathless.

"Pooh, pooh," panted Potiphar. "Your Honour, I move the case be dismissed."

People said afterwards it was hypnotic; others insisted it was sublime; but all agreed as to its being memorable of Potiphar's prowess.

Medill talked on; he was insisting that the men should *do something*, but they remained apathetic

*The author trusts he need scarcely remind the reader that the above story is no fabrication. Time, scene and facts may readily be verified.

in spite of his eloquence. A freight engine backed into town, noisily clanging its bell and coupling on to a long train of freight cars that stood on the siding; then rolled heavily out towards the city. Ere the rumble of its wheels had yet died away, Medill shouted out in a last effort—

“That’s the way with you fellows; you wait too long. You are all cowards; you keep putting things off till your last chance is gone. But I say we must do something to keep the scabs off. Inside of twenty-four hours there will be ten thousand of them here to take your jobs—to steal the bread out of the mouths of your starving wives and children. That’s what has happened where people have been too slow, my friends, in Ireland, in Russia——”

“And Hindustan,” prompted Potiphar.

“Yes, and in Hindustan,” echoed Medill. But at this moment a carriage came rattling down the street, stopped at the margin of the crowd, and Mr. Medill’s strictures on Hindustan and other fanciful slave nations were suddenly terminated by the loud cheers that greeted the newcomer. Mounting upon a box, in a few quiet well-chosen words he assured the men that they had the sympathy of the intelligent people all over the country; warned them against doing anything rash, and promised them that on the morrow every railroad in the country would be tied up that attempted to haul Wheeling cars. “Only stand together and commit no violence.”

CHAPTER XXII.

THE CRIMSON SIGN.

Inspired by the last speaker, no one now thought of going home that night; some of the men beguiled themselves with the pleasing thought that satisfactory terms might be effected with the company before morning; but as the hours dragged on in the night, bringing no word from their masters that the slightest notice had been taken of their rebellion, the many began already to doubt and lose faith. They were so few, after all, and so weak; only five thousand men—no! they were not men, but commodities on an already over-stocked market; their value regulated not in accordance with the profits made by the company, but by the condition of the wholesale market for men and the lowest possible wages on which they could keep soul and body together. This, obviously, was the iron law of wages; they discussed it in little groups here and there as it dawned on their minds. Why, they wondered, had they never felt even an inkling of this truth on election day, when orators had talked to them glibly of a protective tariff that would increase the profits for their masters and so increase wages in exact correspondence? What folly, to think that their masters would ever give them a portion of their increased profits, when they could always buy hundreds of men so cheap in the open markets! So they saw it now, some of them; knew that not until the entire system was changed could they expect justice, would humanity cease to be a commodity.

“I can’t help yearning, Henry, for the good old

days of slavery whenever I see a sight like this," Kenneth sighed wearily as they started for the doctor's home just as dawn was breaking. "A good strong negro was always worth from five hundred to fifteen hundred dollars, and being so valuable he was generally comfortably housed and fed. Owners of fine stock know enough to take care of it. But what is one of these men worth to-day? What is a coal-miner worth, tailors, street-car operatives, gripmen on open-cars in mid-winter, men who toil in sulphurous smelters and are thankful to get to hell in three years, handsome wenches in department-stores and on the street—what are such worth? Good God! not one of them that, in despair of finding work and a comfortable home, could mortgage himself for two hundred dollars, nay! two hundred cents, even to save himself from the last resort of suicide or starvation!"

"Fifty suicides in this city last month, I believe; mostly from economic causes," the doctor added thoughtfully.

"Yes, yes," his companion continued satirically; "you see there is really a crying need for a first-class auction platform and capable auctioneers in our cities where men may be sold as of old. This thing of making them advertise for an owner and meanwhile die in despair is just a trifle thoughtless and unjust. Possibly historians may speak of it to our discredit fifty years hence."

As they were leaving, a magnificent passenger train rolled through the town from the West; a solid line of Wheeling sleepers made in these very shops. The workmen gazed after them sullenly, perplexedly. It was the way with everything they created. It was labour, not wealth, that had wings. The value contained in the carved mahogany, the luxurious upholstering, the faultless carriages

turned true to the light that beamed from the workman's trained eye, the permanency of years that had been exchanged by him for a price barely sufficient to keep him and his family from daily starvation—Ah, it took a mighty brain to grasp this *profound social problem*, and he was so ignorant!

"But he's envious—that's all that ails him!" exclaims the Pharisee.

With the first train to Wheeling in the morning had come Mr. James Dana. Being one of the principal officers and heaviest stockholders of the company, he had left his home in the outskirts of the city before daylight in reply to a telephone message from the superintendent to come immediately. Cautiously, silently, but with great impatience he had stolen out without awakening anybody, and was striding along at a tremendous pace towards the station, when, on the corner of the very last alley, a couple of young gentlemen shoved their revolvers into his face and invited him to step in out of the wind.

"Faugh!" he remonstrated in a low but impatient voice, his hands held in an uncomfortable manner high above his head the while one of the men rifled his pockets. "Now what do you want to do this for? It's not right; it's contrary to Scripture. Why don't you go to work like honest men?"

"Hully gee! Listen to his gaff, Sleepy. Now look here, my friend, just tell us what a honest man can do in dis town? Where's dey any job any honestest'n dis?"

"Nonsense! nonsense! Why, I'd give you both good jobs at two dollars a day!"

Sleepy stared. "What sort of a game are you running, colonel?" he asked, curiously but incredulously. And to his partner: "That's right; sneak

his wad first, Bill. Then we can chin on the square. Now then, colonel, fire ahead!"

Sleepy was a gentleman, there was surely no doubt about this, and being clearly the cashier of the firm he was pleased to be polite when serving a good customer.

Mr. Dana grasped at the invitation. Great occasions sometimes arise, suddenly, without warning or preparation, that arouse like wildfire all a man's generous and benevolent instincts. Under its subtle impulse some men have been known to weep, to kiss their children, to give away their money to churches, to libraries, and to universities. On such occasions a man's past is said to sweep swiftly over him with all the vividness of a drowning man's last despairing glimpse over the bright surface of creation. Yet again, calm, lofty, propitious moments sometimes, fraught with a mountain of duties hitherto shunned or omitted; giant missionary enterprises, schemes for the salvation of society, impulsive, perhaps, and untrained, but nevertheless earnest, sincere, sweet with the promise of redemption for one's self, memorial windows, and a name in the newspapers in capitals.

And again he generously offered them both jobs at two dollars a day—if they would try to be honest.

Sleepy saluted the pavement and spoke, slowly, but candidly, courteously: "I've no doubt you mean all right, colonel," he admitted, "but it ain't possible. You see, I've thought about such deals; I used to be in the swell push, but I came to the conclusion that it was all too dishonest for me. Now if you pay me two plunks per, it is because my labour creates every day the value of eight plunks for you. Hence I am paying you six plunks per for the sake of working for you. No, it won't

do; it ain't honest, colonel. Bill, sneak his super. Good-morning, colonel. Walk straight, now!"

Mr. Dana handed over his watch and cursed inwardly. He felt very *envious*, extremely *envious*! He was obliged to run back to his house and swear at his wife and borrow enough money to take him to Wheeling.

"You will go and see Julia, dear, when you get there," called his wife after him as he left the bed-room.

"Of course; what a foolish question!" he answered irritably, half-way down the stairs.

"And James?" again called his wife.

"Well, what is it?" he snapped. 'Twas the second time he had been held up that morning, and the town of Wheeling was all going to the devil in his absence.

"I wish you would tell Julia's husband, dear, that the medicine he prescribed for my stomach seems someway to make it worse."

"Oh, bother!" he snorted, with spleen. "Tell him yourself, can't you? I've got matter enough of my own to speak with him about."

Mrs. Dana sat bolt-upright in bed. "Why, what's the trouble, James?"

"Trouble? Strike is the trouble—down at Wheeling; and that doctor of Julia's is at the bottom of it. But I'm off." And Mr. Dana ran out, resolving to tell Dr. Holden that if he would pay more attention to his mother-in-law's stomach and less to his father-in-law's factory that it would result vastly to their mutual advantage and happiness.

For he had never forgiven Julia's marriage; he disliked the doctor heartily, and his theories; a relic of that primitive law of brute creation, perchance, wherein one animal feels an instinctive an-

tipathy for all other animals that are obvious enemies to his own exclusive welfare. Moreover, though Mr. James Dana's father had been a plain everyday man of the people, of generous democratic principles, and had stood close to our last great commoner in his fight against slavery, yet the son was a confirmed aristocrat. He believed in propagating plutocracy; Julia, therefore, his only child, had through this marriage offended him more than he cared to confess, especially when he beheld society in general disposed to poke fun at his principles. Some men, even, had dared to whisper, so loud that he plainly overheard it, that "old Dana was a damned excrescence on the face of civilization," and to make obnoxious comparisons between him and his father, alleging that the father's whole life had been devoted to the freeing of slaves, whereas the son was intent only on building up another system of slavery infinitely worse than that overthrown by his father. This of course was very unpleasant to hear. Nor did he ever call at Julia's save when he knew the doctor was absent.

Therefore after being up all night with the strikers, when the doctor came home to breakfast bringing Kenneth with him, he was met on the threshold by Julia who informed him that her father had just been there and that he was very angry.

"He insists that you shall stop the strike at once, Henry," said she, doubtfully.

"Why, Julia," he answered with a laugh, "that's exactly what we've been trying to do all night." He unfolded the newspaper beside his plate. "Hello; listen to this, old man!"

"Great strike at Wheeling! Yielding to the persuasion of that auburn-haired apologist of anarchy and aberrant abolitionist of property rights,

Professor Kenneth Moore, with the assistance of that hare-brained friend of his, that pubescent proselyte and puling village physician who a short time ago startled polite society by eloping with his benefactor's daughter——”

“Good heavens!” Julia exclaimed, dropping the cream-pitcher.

“‘Five thousand men have deliberately locked themselves out from honest industry and chosen starvation for themselves and helpless families.’”

“Oh, Henry! don’t read any more of that stuff,” Julia begged. “Why don’t you and Professor Moore sue them?” She hesitated, coloured. “But then, that’s what everybody says about you.”

The doctor threw the paper aside. “No, my dear, I beg your pardon. The daily newspaper comes a long way to-day from being the voice of everybody. It is merely the voice of the hired man, editor or reporter, who is paid to write in this style by the aggregate capital of the country. Poor devil! he can’t help himself. I’m sorry you broke that pitcher, dear; it’s a too expensive habit for us.”

Kenneth said nothing. Despite the doctor’s words, the imposition practised on the public, day after day, by the daily newspaper was not pleasant. In the event of a strike, he had learned, nothing was ever said by the paper of the economic causes behind it. They confined themselves to the recital of trifles, of incidents pathetic and amusing. John Brown and his sick wife with nine helpless children were starving to death picturesquely, whilst his neighbour, James Smith, had pneumonia, and his wife had a baby, with nothing to eat in the house. Pictures followed, descriptive of the plaintive plight of the Brown and Smith families, and resembling those same specimens of art that were employed to illustrate the famine horrors in India

and more recently Cuba. Manifestly, the papers kept a large supply of this art material on hand, and which was found nearly always available. Plenty of pathos, sentiment, but not a word, not a figure, that would serve to supply the key to it all and suggest the infallible remedy. They were wonderfully short on arithmetic.

Still there were a few people left in the country, he felt, who would not be flim-flammed in this fashion. Recognising the power behind that ran the machine, they had come to treat its every expression with the contempt that was merited. False in one thing false in all, was the motto adopted after they had once opened their eyes. They had quit reading newspapers for facts, and were now depending on books wherein the author had penned his beliefs, upon honour, and whose sincerity, ability, and inductive method covering the history of all time, were absolutely unimpeachable. Half a dozen books of this kind were worth several centuries of newspapers, or magazines either, wherein that so-called *timid* thing, private capital, was plainly at work. Consequently when such a reader heard of the Wheeling strike his very first thought would be: How much money has the corporation actually invested, and how much fictitious stock is it seeking to pay dividends on by sweating its employes? Whereto the corporation was wont to reply, through the newspapers in the ring: This is none of your business; you are envious!

"Would you like to glance over this newspaper, Kenneth?" the doctor asked.

"Oh, no, I thank you," he answered as he drank his coffee; "it is all too much like that old tale of St. Peter apropos of the late millionaire arrival from America. Says St. Peter: 'Jay'—or Andrew

or John—‘Jay, if a workman produces the value of four dollars and thou takest three dollars away from him, and then two-thirds more of his remainder for water-tax, how much will he have left?’ Whereto Jay: ‘Methinks, your worship, if the workman be industrious he should have five dollars and fifty cents left.’ Thereupon St. Peter taps his nose lightly three times with his index finger. ‘Ah, Jay, thou knowest in good sooth thou art a sad jester. Go below!’ ”

The doctor laughed, spilling his coffee. “And for once, I suppose, Jay takes a tumble to himself.”

Mr. Dana did not return to the doctor’s house, being too busily occupied with the superintendent all day long in employing men to fill the positions of the strikers. Men who had been unemployed for months came down upon the town of Wheeling in swarms. Seeing this the strikers became uneasy, and finally angry. By noon the situation was ominous; and by night-fall, inflamed by the spectacle of strange men using the tools that had many years been their own, they had completely forgotten their starvation resolution passed only the night before, and were ready for any deed that would compel the corporation to grant their reasonable demands.

Nor were there lacking among them men who at such times believed in the use of force, basing their right to this instrument upon history and the experience of the past. The past! that holy-of-holies of conservatives, yet out of which the veriest demagogues now found precedents by the score to mock and hurl them to ruin. Already the men were divided into hostile factions on this; the breach rapidly widening as paid agitators worked among them, urging the men to some act of lawlessness that might serve to call out the regular army, and

thus give protection to unemployed thousands waiting to rush in.

"Every great reform the world has ever known," mouthed Medill, again mounted in front of the bonfire, "has been accomplished by force. Force was the means that seated Christianity on the site of the Empire; that sustained Mohammed; brought the Reformation; wrote the Declaration of Independence; overthrew negro slavery. Are we to abandon it now? Ain't the means that was good enough for our grandfathers"—Medill was born in Ireland—"for Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, and Abraham Lincoln, good enough for us?"

Kenneth turned to the doctor. "Is there no way to strangle this fellow?"

"No," Holden answered; "you see the danger lies in the fact that what he says is no more than the truth; it's the past with a vengeance—conservatism come home to roost. Whereas your own wish, your idea, your hope that society's next advance towards greater freedom may come without force, is merely a theory after all."

Nevertheless they had worked incessantly throughout the day, as on the night before, persuading the men to keep within lawful bounds. Early in the day, beholding how rapidly positions were being filled with outsiders, they had gone, accompanied by the leaders of the strike, to the superintendent, and urged that he cancel all engagements with new men and offer to all the strikers their old positions.

"No, sir," declared that official peremptorily. "Such positions as have not already been filled the old workmen may have on applying. The new men will not be discharged."

This declaration received an ovation in the papers all the way from New York to San Francisco.

"Shall a man not be allowed to run his own business to suit himself? What do we care for what the labourer calls his rights? He has none—he is only a commodity on a falling market!"

Hence there was no other course save to urge the men to stand together now as they had agreed, not to retreat in a panic, leaving the devil to take the hindmost. Meanwhile every railroad leading out of the city had been tied up as promised, the railway employes having struck in sympathy. But by noon many places had been filled, new train-crews were made up, and preparations completed for running the trains as usual.

At one of the main switches a new man had been stationed. A striker came up and seized him by the arm. "Come away," he insisted; "come away! Good God! can't you see that you are fighting against yourself, your own people? We are all in the same boat together!"

The man looked at him; shook his head. "Yes," he answered sullenly, "I know all about that. I once struck for my rights, and a scab got my job. I've been out of work for a year. I know it's a matter of principle with you fellows, but I've learned that a man can't afford to have any principles in this world; can't be on the square. I've got to live, and my family."

"But you're cutting your own throat! Anyway, you'll be mobbed if you stay here."

"All right; go ahead!"

An injunction had already been secured, enjoining the men from interfering with trains carrying the mails. Shortly after dark a freight train of ten dilapidated box-cars loaded with straw and empty dry-goods boxes had been backed into town and left upon a side-track close to the factory, with only two raw militia-men to guard it, stationed at

either end. It was but a short distance from where Medill stood speaking in front of the bonfire, and at his suggestion of cars loaded with precious woods, costly cloths, luxurious trappings which were to be used for the purpose of making fetters for slaves, for sweating them into a condition so abject that in a few months they would be utterly unrecognizable in the scheme of God and humanity—"Are ye dogs? Are ye slaves? Will ye stand it, men?"

A tremendous shout rose up, sweeping out over the prairie, echoing against the tall buildings of the city and carrying consternation to the strongholds of capital. The Huns and Vandals were ready to ravish the Empire.

"To hell with them! Hang the thieves! Burn them up!"

In a trice the mischief was done. The bonfire that had blazed to shed light upon the scene was quickly set upon; brands seized, whilst the sparks flew to the stars. Howling succeeded cheers; curses clutched at the throat; the mob was maudlin, mad. Where Kenneth stood at the marge, the entire mass swept by like a cloud and a river of flame to wreak destruction on whatever stood in its path.

It had all come up so swiftly as to take him unawares. He had meant to give warning, but how could he speak to that mob? There remained but one course. Two-thirds of the way to the freight train and he had overtaken them; was at their head.

"Go back," he shouted; "go back! You fools! Can't you see it's only a bait?"

They jeered and pushed past him, cursing him; somebody spat in his face as he fell on one knee. When he got to his feet his blood was up. No,

they should not do this thing. He'd shoot the very first fool that applied a torch. The leaders were yards ahead of him; he felt in his pocket, drew out a revolver, and ran on with the pack at his heels.

The foremost were now within a dozen yards of the militiaman. One could see that he was frightened. Knowing naught of the contents of the cars and being stationed there to protect them he meant to do so. He would be teased and laughed at by the fellows who clerked in the office with him if he didn't. He knew nothing of the wrongs of labour—such questions had never interested him. Besides he was now a soldier; soldiers aren't supposed to think; their sole duty is to shoot when commanded. Still, he had not expected an attack so soon; it was too early in the strike.

"Keep back!" he cried, levelling his rifle. "Keep back!"

He scarce heard his own words. Some one threw a brand that struck him fairly in the face. His knees trembled, not knowing what he did he pulled the trigger.

In the deep silence that followed you could hear the men drop, and their moans. Then, curses of hell! what a cry! The militiaman dropped his gun with a yell and dodged suddenly beneath a car, dashing away like a deer into the darkness of the prairie beyond. The flames that shot up from the cars and a thousand torches just lit the edge of his heels as he flew, causing one of the strikers to send a bullet after him from his own abandoned rifle. He dropped, and the darkness swallowed him.

Directly every new man employed by the company was driven from his position by the now thoroughly enraged strikers sweeping everything before them. The first shot had made them reckless,

wholly indifferent to consequences; insomuch that when a train finally entered the town, cars filled by hundreds of unemployed from every point of the earth and completely guarded and backed up by a company of militia, it was met by a thousand strikers with arms levelled to kill. And the fight began. No need to ask at this point with the dilettante: Who dropped the handkerchief, gave the crimson sign? The old, old struggle, master on one hand and the slaves on the other. True, there was no capital invested in slaves' bodies. It was unnecessary, the market being always close to the master's door; sometimes Hungarians, Italians, Irish, and anon Chinamen and Negroes, even the late-coming but inevitable American—the master might take his choice.

Half an hour later, when the riot that followed had been partially quelled, Holden came up where Kenneth was standing and touched him on the arm. "Ah, here you are," he said. "Are you going home to-night or will you come with me? I suppose you've heard that Phillips is dead? Ten lives, all told."

"Phillips? Good heavens! What happened to him?"

"Stabbed. I have just come from him. Some one drove a knife clean through his heart. Medill has disappeared."

"And his wife—is she here? Has she been told?"

"Who, Mrs. Phillips? Oh, no; you see it just occurred, not ten minutes ago. She ought to be told, I suppose. By the way, you know her, don't you?"

He started violently. "Oh, no—yes. But I can't tell her that. Wait! I could tell Miss Nielsen, perhaps. Would you mind coming with me, Henry, as a particular favour?"

The physician assented. "If you wish it, surely."

Finding a carriage they started at once; intending to drive by the way of Wildwood, where Kenneth would stop and leave word with Mabel, and then hasten on. As they left the hue-and-cry of the town behind them, the swift contrast of silence surrounding grew profoundly impressive, neither one speaking a word for awhile. 'Twas already past ten o'clock, but light as day, the full moon floating midway to the zenith in a cloudless sky. They were soon in the midst of the prairie, with no buildings nearer than the little suburban towns scattered round them at the distance of a mile or more, the lights of whose cottages, rising above the lowland haze, made them appear like tiny vessels afloat on a summer sea.

"I can't help thinking," the doctor remarked at last, with professional forgetfulness, perhaps, of their mission's all too painful aspect as he lit his cigar—"I can't help thinking, somehow, of the first time we saw him. You remember, don't you, at Monte Carlo; just such a night as this. I recollect your taking his card and afterward reading it, and our amusement over his name. Well, the grand croupier has called his last *Rein ne va plus* for Potiphar. And his wife—she was certainly a striking looking woman. By the way, you played with her, didn't you, Kenneth?"

A pause followed. Anon the silence seemed to rouse his companion with a start. "I beg your pardon, Henry. Did you speak?"

Holden nodded, tapping the ash from his cigar. "I was recalling the time you played together; that's all."

"Oh, yes; when we were children," Kenneth answered shortly, again relapsing into sub-consciousness.

This time the physician started. Was his friend referring satirically to that occasion but a few years back when they both fancied that they were men? Or had the teeming years just passed—in this dull industrial world wherein men and women must seek relief from stagnation in inconsequential novels—been indeed so significant to him, so full of struggle, sacrifice, of that almost constant yet unavoidable warfare against time-honoured yet tyrannous institutions, as to make all previous years seem but the merest halcyon of childhood?

At the door of his home in Wildwood Kenneth sprang out. "Just a moment, Henry," he said, and let himself in with his latch-key. The house was dark. Mabel must have gone out, he thought. Still, it was late; she surely would be home at this hour. Or she might have left a note for him in his study. He went in, and lit the gas. No; his papers were there on his desk, undisturbed, just as he had last sat there—with the addition of no single slip of paper. "Mabel!" he called hurriedly, stepping into the hall; "Mabel!" Then stood still and listened, whilst her name echoed and fell and the silence stole over him. In front of him stood her piano, still open, the strings murmuring back a faint response to his call. Ah, it was still singing that German ballad! "Mabel"—louder, this time, as he flew up the stairs to her room.

It was in perfect order, as usual, but with the misdoubt that had seized him he went straight to the dresser. Yes, there it lay; it was what he had feared, what the silence had whispered. It was deep red, the envelope; deep red—he could see it in the night.

He lit the gas, and paused, holding the letter in his hand—

"Kenneth."

How red it was; heart-red—and how fragrant!

"I could not say good-by," she wrote; "you would only argue, and it would do no good. And I am so tired of it all—I can endure it no longer. I shall go where I can make my own living—by singing, possibly. O Kenneth! I did not think I was born for this. I cannot understand what it was that came over you—changed you so. Everything is gone—you have ruined my life. I must begin all over again. Mabel."

He was aroused by voices below, and Holden calling his name, the while he continued to stand there holding the letter. He now dimly remembered hearing his door-bell ring a short time before, and with momentary wonder at its meaning. Footsteps began ascending the stairs.

"Ah, old man, I've bad news for you," Holden said, stepping into the room. "However, it's only a trick; we shall——"

Kenneth turned; Holden caught a glimpse of his face.

"My God! Kenneth, what is the trouble?"

"Nothing—that is, you know, I suppose. Ah, what does this gentleman want?"

An officer had followed Holden into the room and stood waiting respectfully. At Kenneth's words he glanced towards Holden for answer. The latter made no sign.

"I am sorry to trouble you, Mr. Moore," the officer stammered, pausing a moment to clear his voice; "I have a warrant for your arrest."

"My arrest? What on earth is the charge?"

"It's on account of the strike," the officer answered, in low apologetic tones. "Interfering with United States mails."

Kenneth turned slowly towards Holden, his face giving lively evidence of the conflicting emotions within him. "Henry," said he queerly, "what a—

what a jest it all is! Can no one be serious? Even Uncle Sam must have his little joke out, I suppose. Good heavens!" he broke into laughter; "so I interfered with the mails, did I? You see how—how fortunate it is, old man, that she neglected to put a stamp on her letter. Ha! What if I had interfered with that! There is really no limit, you see, to my capacity for devilish and criminal deeds once the law has been rightly constructed—when honest men all become criminals, and all criminals honest men! Well, officer, what is the penalty? Gad! I believe hanging would be about right—don't you think so, Henry?"

CHAPTER XXIII.

FAIRY GOD-MOTHERS AGAIN—AND CINDERELLA.

It was late in the fall ere his release came, after he had served four full months' imprisonment and the public's appetite for the just had been in a measure appeased. However, there had never been any doubt of his guilt; his trial had proved that conclusively. Abundant testimony had been adduced, moreover, showing clearly the dangerous and wicked trend of his teachings—invariably towards confusion and spoliation of the favoured few to the advantage of the unfavoured many. As was only natural, of course, the few failed to see anything beneficent in such an ideal. "He is unsettling all the established principles of Democracy, of Christianity!" they, the settlers, exclaimed, hands perpendicular in virtuous indignation. "Yes," he had admitted with a laugh; "thieves in

general, of all species and time, past or present, whether in divine purple or equally divine broad-cloth, detest the idea of spoliation of themselves at the hands of the vulgar public already despoiled."

And to the friend at his side as the clouds lowered, after certain impeccable witnesses had asseverated that he had run at the head of the mob with drawn revolver, had fiendishly driven the men to fire the freight cars and shoot down the unfortunate militiaman stationed to guard them—"You see, Henry, I shall be fortunate to escape hanging, after all."

His sentence had been for six months, but towards the end society began to relent; beheld him suffering, and sympathised. Especially when, shortly afterwards, having won its fight with the strikers, the Wheeling Car Co. declared a dividend of forty per cent, and once more watered its stock. Thereupon certain men declared boldly, in public, that Professor Moore's fight had been in the best interests of humanity, of the Republic; that he had done right in encouraging the strikers, interfering with United States mails, even. Aye, that it were better the United States had no mails if slaves must be shackled to carry them. Moreover a strong popular movement had set in towards municipal ownership of certain robber monopolies; and stranger than all, beholding how one set of men had lately acquired thousands of miles of railroads, the *Republican* had actually come out in an anarchistic editorial saying: "Let these men beware! The people of this country are too intelligent calmly to permit one set of men to continue monopolising heaven and earth to their own selfish aggrandizement." O prescient *Republican*!

On his release he had returned to his home in Wildwood where Holden had been living during

the past four months; for, responsive to that same force that had imprisoned his friend, the physician had been told by the superintendent after the strike that the company had decided to appoint a new doctor to look after the health of the town of Wheeling, and that "the place wasn't really large enough to support two." Whereupon Julia had affirmed positively: "It is all papa's work, Henry! I told him so, too; told him we had received notice to quit, and he pretended to be awfully surprised—said that he felt great sympathy, even anguish, over it. But I said to him that that was all right, only he needn't expect to fool all the people all the time."

Her husband laughed. "Tut! what did he say to that?"

"Oh my! he was awfully angry!" her eyes growing big at the memory. "He just got right up and left the table. Afterwards mamma told me he swore that I was just as big an anarchist as that husband of mine. Wasn't it funny? Still, it's perfectly outrageous that he should be so stubborn and speak of us so. It makes mamma feel badly. However, I'm precious glad we don't have to live in this old town of his any longer!"

Her husband, though, could not take it so lightly. He had but little money saved, and very little property. He had now been in Wildwood several months without making a dollar. Yet when Kenneth came back, and with prospects clearly the most gloomy and hopeless—looking broken and worn, apology for the insistent bread-and-butter burden of life trembling on his lips, despite the satirical protest that he never felt better in his life, more anxious for a fight—Holden had answered heartily—

"That's right, old man! Only don't go in for a

fight just yet; wait awhile. Try and be dishonest, if you can, and you will surely find a place waiting for you in this world. Anyway, you know that whatever I have is yours."

A few days after this he had called on Mr. Ludington, in response to that kindly interest and good feeling to which the old man had testified in a recent letter. "Come to me," he had written, "and if I can do anything under heaven, my lad, to set you right with the world, God knows you will not find me aping the Pharisee."

He rang the door-bell. An old coloured servant that had known him ever since he was a child opened the door. "Well, I declar' to goodness!" he cried, his expression passing swiftly from polite indifference to amaze, thence delight—"Ef it ain't Mr. Kenneth!"

Kenneth smiled; extended his hand. "Is he in, George?"

"Oh, yes, sah; he's in all right. Step right in. But now ef I ain't declared 'fore ev'body, Mr. Kenneth, mo'n fifty times, that that trial of your'n was the mos' excruciatin' piece of legislation that a full-blooded American citizen ev——"

"Sh! I will surprise him."

He passed into the library, his light footsteps on the yielding carpet giving no warning of his approach; found the old gentleman seated in his easy chair, his back towards him, deep in an edition de luxe of Spencer's *Social Statics*.

"How—how do you like him, Mr. Ludington?"

The old man gave a start, attempted hastily to rise. "Kenneth!" he cried hoarsely; "is it you?"

"Yes; no, don't get up. It's not worth while—the doctrine of *laissez faire* will easily fit all occasions. Haven't you learned that yet, Uncle Amos?"

The old man grasped his hand, searched the face beneath its mockery. "Be seated, Kenneth," he said finally. And after chatting of affairs in general for a space, he added: "Now tell me, what are your plans? Of course you have heard from Mabel?"

"No"—with a shake of the head; "that is, only what the papers say. You know she is singing in London—with success, I believe."

"But you have written her, surely," the old man continued; "you have urged her to come back?"

Again a shake of the head. "Come back? Where to—a prison? Or to the home of a man without a penny and without work? No; I've not written her. I ruined her life, she believes. Well, I've no wish to ruin it further."

"Nonsense! nonsense!" the old man expostulated. "Why, whatever put such an idea into your head? You forget, my lad, that the family is the very foundation of society; that it is sacred, inviolable—to be preserved at all hazards! Dear me! your theories, Kenneth, your—your——" He gave it up.

Kenneth leaned back in his chair. "If men and women, Uncle Amos, were only as free as the little birds of the air, and had the same power of changing their environment whenever required to meet their necessities, the food of life and the right to get it being free, unmonopolised—then, perhaps, the family might be preserved intact. But as it is, what right have I, having nothing, to inflict my life upon hers? No; I am very glad, of course, that she has done well, but as for the old life—it is past."

"Oh, no; no, no! It is all false, Kenneth, all false!" Mr. Ludington rallied vigorously. "Why, on the contrary, I have always had a feeling that

you would have done better, infinitely better, my lad, if you had only had a larger family—children, you know, close family ties! That's what makes a man manly, successful! You've always played the egoist—couldn't help it, in fact; but a large family would have cured you. I assure you it would!"

Kenneth's eyes lost their twinkle, became grave. "I don't understand," he said painfully.

"Well, then—h'm! what I mean, you know, is that you would have thought more of your family; become absorbed in it—to the exclusion of everything else."

Silence. "That is to say," he answered finally, "that you believe the burden of life might have oppressed me so sharply that I should have been glad to resort to any trick, any scheme, by which to provide for my family—that their interests would have been paramount, even to the exclusion of telling the truth, if necessary, in order to get a living." He laughed. "Surely, Uncle Amos, you don't believe that is manly—you must have just read that out of Spencer?"

The old gentleman fidgeted in his chair. "Um! But have you no plans, Kenneth? Won't you keep on teaching?"

"Well, that remains to be seen. You see, I applied to various colleges before my term was out here; but to no purpose. The majority of our schools have no department of economics. For instance, one of the largest and most influential schools in Pennsylvania to which I wrote replied that they had no regular lectures on political-economy, but that an attorney from New York was in the habit of running down there twice a month and giving a lecture, which the students were at liberty to attend or stay away as they chose. Think

of that—an attorney giving lectures on economics! The devil giving lectures on theology!"

The old gentleman laughed. "What school is that?"

But he would not give the name; merely stating that this particular college was run by the money derived from the railroad that controlled the entire anthracite output of the United States. "Naturally," he added, "they do not care to inculcate economic truths."

Mr. Ludington mused a moment. "I hoped," he said at last, "that you would be less severe in your construction, Kenneth, as—as time passed on. That you would learn to—to——"

"To adapt my moral nature to my environment, perhaps, as Dr. Griggs advises. Is that what you mean?"

"Um!" stroking his smooth-shaven chin, reflectively. "Well, I don't know—not exactly. Perhaps it is. To teach that which is allowable, you know; and not concern yourself too much with—with abstract truth." Mr. Ludington mopped his forehead. "Statistics, you know; and—and such things."

"He set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them round about; and, behold, there were many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry."

"Humph! nonsense!" Mr. Ludington dropped his eyes, with a gesture of impatience. In his heart, though, he felt that Kenneth was right; knew that he might have received a comfortable sum from the gas company and a permanent position in the university had he chosen to teach a lie. But he had flaunted it; Mammon thrust its painted face into his, and he had snatched off the mask and trampled on it, scornfully, without due reverence.

Some one had been wanted to teach the blessings of private capital, but he—he had taught that the private capitalist was a nuisance, no more to be tolerated than any other slave-driver or feudal baron.

“Do I understand then, Kenneth, that you mean to continue the old way?”

“Yes. At least I shall not recant. This world is scarcely worth a lie, if such be the price of its favour. Meanwhile I must find some position that will support me. Don’t you know of something I could do, Mr. Ludington—it matters little what?”

Despite the seeming indifference of his manner, the old man detected the appeal in his voice, and its urgency; continuing to sit there at his library-table pondering over the matter long after Kenneth had departed. Dear me! he thought, was Kenneth to walk the streets searching for a chance job the same as any other unfortunate clerk out of work? Were his life work and studies, efforts solely in the cause of greater humanity, to come to an inglorious end simply because a group of greedy money-getters, of the style of Rockland and other purse-proud fools, dared to challenge the obvious truth of the scholar’s teachings? Was it true, after all, that the law of gravity would be challenged and suppressed if the rights of capital were risked through its acceptance?

The old gentleman didn’t know. Such thoughts were really quite uncomfortable. He sighed, rose from his chair, and went out for a walk.

The following morning when Kenneth returned Mr. Ludington handed him several letters addressed to various commercial houses. “I don’t know,” he said, “whether these will be of any service. You see, I have very little influence nowadays with men who are doing the business of the

world. In fact, I told you once before that nearly all my money is invested in banking—I find it safest, on the whole.”

Kenneth made no answer, and he continued, with assurance that was plainly affected. “But now I’ve been wondering, since you were here yesterday, why you couldn’t do newspaper work. I believe you know how to write—on almost any subject. At any rate, I own a little stock in one of our dailies, and so, as you see, I have taken the liberty to give you a letter to the managing editor of the *Republican*.”

“The *Republican*! Good heavens!”

Mr. Ludington nodded, patiently. “Yes, I know its politics are not yours, exactly. Still, you understand very well that this need make no difference. Men on newspapers write as they are paid, not as they believe.”

Kenneth smiled. “As the multifarious Bismarck commands,” he assented, yet wondering how the old gentleman really had come to this conclusion: that newspaper-writers were simply paid liars. However, he thanked him, dissembling as best he could; was leaving the room when the old man’s voice called him back.

“Kenneth,” he said feelingly, “Kenneth, wait—wait a moment! Let us not deceive each other. You know, and I know, that there are thousands of young men out of work in this city, who can find nothing to do—nothing! Well, I want to warn you, honestly; I want you to realise that you are at a critical point in life. When the world and its entire commercial and religious institutions have become to one merely a lie, secret, perhaps, but yet known—good God! whither shall a man turn then? But, my lad, whatever else you do, don’t get

discouraged. Good-by. Come and see me—when-ever you can.”

A pressure of the hand, and he was out on the street making his way towards Wildwood. Ah, the fairy god-mother, he mused; the fairy god-mother! Would she never have done with her disguises? Yet how would the unfortunates of this life subsist without her? She it was, obviously, who preserved the equilibrium of this world, the eternal “perfectly balanced, sir; perfectly balanced!” rather than that ignoble pretender, gentle Dr. Little.

Still musing, he walked the entire distance, arriving at his home just as a carriage was circling in front of the curb. The fairy god-mother must have her little play out, he said, smiling, as he recognized the turnout. See, it is the princess! Whence comes she, from what other world; transforming everything in the twinkling of an eye. The two black beetles dragging that prodigious pumpkin are now six milk-white steeds, with coachman and footmen, deferent, dumb, caparisoned to attend a queen. Whilst his own modest home, from the garish light of noon was now a mansion all aglow. Nocturnal arms enfold it; and within, music, noble knights and gentle ladies moving to the minuet.

But no; at high noon the warning clock struck midnight in his brain. She opened the door of her carriage.

“Look out!” he cried—the noctambulist.—“Look out! Don’t lose your slipper!”

“My slipper!” she exclaimed, looking down in sudden dismay as she stood there on the step, skirts gathered round her, their variegated colours all unfolding like the petals of a rose. “What on earth do you mean?”

He took her hand and helped her down. “I

didn't know you were in town. It's very good in you to come away out here, Enid. Yes, Julia is home."

There was no pressure from his hand. She saw only the satirical smile on his face. "Wait! what did you mean?" she asked, with wonder at his greeting, as they moved towards the house.

He fumbled with his latch-key and let her in. "Nothing," he said. "If you've never heard of any one losing a slipper, why then, it's not worth while for—for me to advertise it." He threw open the door. "I've been thinking of the fairy god-mother, somehow, all this morning."

She glanced up as she passed him; the roses deepened; the stars behind her veil glowed softly. She looked away.

CHAPTER XXIV.

HER FATAL SLIPPER.

"Did you see him, Enid? How did he appear?"

Enid threw aside her wraps, having just returned from her drive to Wildwood. "Oh, yes; I saw him." She said no more; seemed strangely weary.

"But is he coming to see me?" Nannette persisted, glancing up impatiently. "Why, what is the matter? Isn't he well; or didn't he care to see you or—or anyone?"

Enid shook her head. "No; yes—I don't know. Things have happened so that I don't seem to understand anything, any more—himself least of all. Everything is so queer. You ask how he appeared. Well, then, do you know how a man acts whose chief characteristic ever since boyhood has been

his sincerity, but who suddenly loses the power of speaking honestly, seriously, with anyone? Or as one who, having lost all the world, should thereupon exclaim: 'Fy! it is nothing; one can do very well without it!'"

Nannette's forehead puckered. "But how would you have him act, Enid? Surely you would not choose to see him brooding over his misfortunes?"

"Brooding! Of course not. Still, one would expect him to speak seriously for two minutes at a time, especially when anyone takes interest enough in him to ask what he intends doing."

"Oh; did you ask?"

"Y—yes," stammering an instant at Nannette's directness. "For really, I don't see how he is going to live. You know he has nothing; and of course he won't be able to find another college position—not now. Well, I meant merely to prove my friendship, but at the faintest hint of any assistance he protested quickly: 'No, Mrs. Phillips; I shall always remember with pleasure your generous impulse, but you forget that I have two positions waiting for me already.'"

"Dear me! how very fortunate! What were they—did he say?"

Enid bit her lip. "Oh, yes; he assured me that he had every hope of being elected president of the Main Street National Bank, or else associate editor of the *Republican*. The choice is simply optional with himself."

Nannette burst into laughter. It was all too preposterous. "To think of his filling either position!" she cried. "You know he declares that a man might just as well keep a saloon as run a bank. And as for the *Republican*—but fancy his writing that stuff!"

However, Enid refused to consider it lightly;

accepted it rather as a slight, wilful and unkind. Indeed in the loneliness of her heart she had fallen into the way of thinking of him constantly; sympathising with him openly, moreover, and always taking his part despite the fact that nearly all the good people of her acquaintance, wealthy neighbors, fashionable society people and their kind, held him directly responsible for the disturbances at Wheeling—the discontent with liberal wages, the envious sneers directed against themselves and other generous stockholders, and lastly the riot, numbering several innocent lives in its tragedy, including even her husband's.

"To think that she can be so brazen as to dare defend that man!" exclaimed Mrs. Simmons, to her neighbour Mrs. Adams, hands uplifted in unspeakable horror. "Dear me! and did I never tell you that I had actually met him once—why, it was right here at your house! He seemed such a nice quiet gentleman, too; one would never have taken him for an anarchist then, do you think so?"

"Sh!" Mrs. Adams dropped a lace handkerchief between the pages of her novel to mark the place, and leaned forward mysteriously—"sh! have you forgotten how they were together nearly the whole evening?"

"Sh-shocking!" Mrs. Simmons' voice vibrated strangely between horror and curiosity. "That accounts for it, I just believe. You know his own aunt, Mrs. Mason, told me that he treated his wife shamefully—actually drove her away."

"Ah," And Mrs. Adams, now wholly forgetful of her novel in this fresher plot, drew her chair closer to her caller's and together they whispered it over; how everything had obviously been planned between them that very night, at her home, even to the strike and the final getting rid of Potiphar,

Mabel, and whatever other inconvenient obstacles stood in their way. "It all reminds me," simpered Mrs. Simmons as she rose to depart, "of what I once heard a gentleman say—a literary man, he was. 'Truth, Mrs. Simmons,' said he, 'is stranger than fiction.' Now I think that was quite clever, don't you? Good-by; I've had *such* a delightful call."

To which remarks Enid had lent but a deaf ear; catching them only as they came unawares, as the unavoidable buzz and sting of that disagreeable ephemera which always accompanies the life of humid atmosphere and social stagnation, where rank growth and strange colours predominate. It meant nothing to her that such in general had marked him for the butt of their displeasure. She was fortunately not dependent on that curious monster, the best society, for her estimate of men and affairs; had long outgrown the hypocrisy of its favour or dislike. She admitted to herself that he had been unwise, even quixotic; yet that was a very vital form of windmill that he had charged against, after all, with power to lengthen its arms, and reach out, to crush, and to write its own account of the engagement afterward, and whisper it on every wind. Aye, it had merely to revolve, independent of the grace of God, and it could generate its own wind, as any one could see. A very vital windmill, in sooth. She could not wonder that he had been unhorsed, thrown into a dungeon.

During the summer and fall, accompanied by Nannette and her mother she had visited various cities and resorts throughout the East, restlessly seeking satisfaction in the life around her, but towards which she at best could feel but a growing indifference. A masquerade, the dancers all un-

masked but still capering—it was growing hideous; if they had kept their masks on, or turned the lights lower. Watching Nannette at work on her proof sheets one day she had said, “It must be glorious to have work in which you thoroughly believe, can put your heart.” And Nannette had glanced up, slowly, sweeping the hair back from her brow and the eyes that were deep in the mystery of other worlds—“Oh, do you think so?” she said. “You see, sometimes I think it is nothing but hypnotism. All one has to do is to fix the eyes intently on a single object, and, presto! everything else vanishes. Now this,” sorrowfully, as she held up a sheet, “is only a page of the *Rhapsodist*. But I’ve always wanted to finish that story that Mr. Kent and the professor made me stop.”

“But why should he?” Enid asked after pondering a moment. “It seems to me he should have preferred you to write in that style.”

“Who—the professor?” Nannette shook her head. “No; in fact I think he hated to involve his friends; that he even grew to realise the hopelessness of his economic reform struggle so far as present success was concerned, and that he wished at times he had no ties, no close friends—and so might be free to fight his own battle.”

“Nonsense!” This was merely another of his quixotic notions, Enid thought, of which he had so many, too many, but for which, nevertheless, she had always liked him; winning favour that dated from childhood, from the time when he had taken her beautiful ship out of her hands and sent it sailing in the face of the storm out over the lake on its way to Africa. Whenever she thought of him now that memory always returned, half sadly, yet invariably fetching a smile. “Poor Kenneth! he should have known better.”

To the mountain hotel where they were staying, one scarlet day in the fall came Mr. Oliver Goldsmith-Smith; blithe, and rosy of face, a chubby finger caressing anon the dimple it loved so well. "Why didn't you bring Mr. Kent?" they had asked. Where to he had shaken his head, quickly; oh, no; it was quite impossible for them *both* to come away at this time of the year; their fall publications must be looked after, and the business of the O. G. Goldsmith-Smith publishing house had become enormous—yes, simply enormous. Besides, he explained, Sam never seemed, somehow, to enjoy himself save when at work; feared, poor fellow, it had become habitual to him, you know.

"It's only to be expected that Nature will stunt and defraud us at last if we ruthlessly continue to put her aside—prevents a well-rounded growth and existence. Don't you think so, Miss Nielsen?"

Mischief shone in her eyes, and she dropped them quickly. "Yes," she admitted, pensively, stroking the petals of a chrysanthemum he had given her, "I can easily understand that it might."

Howbeit they made him welcome. He fetched them news of the town and was invariably good company. Indeed if Goldsmith-Smith's literary adolescence was wont at times to become a trifle obtrusive, such was quickly forgotten in consideration of his pleasing capacity for finding enjoyment in most simple things. He could admire without criticism. The surface of things still enthralled him; every column and filigree in nature's really wondrous façade was as dear to his heart as his dimple. Together he and Nannette strolled over the hills that were then in all their glory of crimson and gold; birch and maple and oak were aflame, whilst high on the summit the sunlight flooded the maiden shoulders of winter.

"Look! It is her first appearance," he cried. "I always loved a debutante, Miss Nielsen. All nature has woven her gown."

She laughed in momentary sympathy. "Indeed, she is quite your style, Mr. Goldsmith-Smith; although rather cold, one would think. Why don't you write her story? But wouldn't you like to see her closer?"

Oliver agreed, gladly. "Oh, yes, of course I can write the story afterwards, you know. Do you really think she is cold?"

"A—ah; it might spoil it," she replied, with a demure little shake of the head. Whereat he glanced at her wistfully, and she looked away. "Come on;" she added finally. "There's a car up at noon, I believe."

The following morning at an early hour, hearing the omnibus drive up Enid raised the shade of her chamber and glanced out; saw Mr. Goldsmith-Smith step into the bus, with glossy silk hat, collar of his light overcoat buttoned full to the chin. "Why, Nannette, there goes Mr. Smith!" she cried, and rapped on the pane.

He glanced up; lifted his hat. He did not smile. The driver cracked his whip and the horses plunged off to the station.

"Oh, has he gone, Enid?" said Nannette, coming to the window. "Dear me! the ground is white with frost."

Enid looked at her curiously. Had she really refused him, she wondered? Poor fellow! Goldsmith-Smith was certainly a nice young man, a little fresh, perhaps, yet talented and growing, and withal he had money. And Nannette—was she not even a little bit spoiled by her temporary success and renown? An hour or two later Enid sought her,

finding her still hard at work on her proof-sheets, unaware of her presence ere she spoke.

"Tell me, dear," she said, her arm stealing round her; "what are you up to? Are you busy marrying the *Rhapsodist*, after all?"

Nannette flushed, released her arm quickly and rose. "What nonsense!" she cried. "Why, you know he would never approve such a thing!" An instant she held her ground, eyes flashing indignantly at the suggestion. "It's out—outrageous that——" her voice broke; turning hastily, she ran from the room in confusion.

So whatever the reasons for her conduct, Nannette kept them to herself. In her mind's eye, maybe, there still lingered a stage picture of that strange pantomime between Sam and Oliver at the time when she had first called at their office, the every significant gesture of which she had seen reflected in a mirror in front of her, but without their knowledge. Now there are times when first impressions are momentous, and when Pelion upon Ossa afterwards in all manner of kindness and graciousness can occasion its recipient merely an uncomfortable sense of weight and oppression, leaving room for scarcely one throb of gratitude or forgiveness. Moreover she had mistaken Sam for the proprietor from the first, and nothing had ever happened afterwards to destroy her illusion. A woman's heart-judgment is never to be really overshadowed by flagrant instances of Fortune's mistakes. Oliver was merely an accident—an interloper!

"Sam," he had said on returning, taking off his coat and hanging it on the back of the chair before his desk—"Sam, it's all up. I've been an ass," his accents fraught with the profoundest intelligence.

"Oh, that's nothing," Sam murmured complacently, ripping open an envelope and unfolding a check; "we all have a kinship with that exceedingly human creature at times." He glanced at him keenly and went on with his work. The situation was embarrassing to him, nevertheless, as no note in his tones implied. He wanted to say more, to express his sympathy for his friend and speak of the cause of his sufferings as she doubtless deserved. Nannette shouldn't have played with him so—he was too young! She was so absorbed in her stories, in the drama of life behind the curtain, that she never would stop to look on or take seriously the vaudeville always before her. Well, she was much to be blamed; no one had any right to treat the performers in the "continuous" with such reckless and dispassionate indifference. And yet, Oliver was greatly to be censured, too. Why should he always refuse to look below the surface! After all, though, the experience might prove beneficent; might even improve his style, he reflected grimly, though of course delicacy forbade he should speak of it now.

"Oliver," he said finally, seeing how his friend still sat dreaming before his desk—"Oliver, I'm more delighted to see you home again than I may have acknowledged. You see, there's no end of work."

Oliver roused himself with visible effort, took his feet from his desk. "Yes, I know—I know it, Sam." He stood up, drew on his coat. "Well, I'm going out just a moment——"

"Going out! Why, you've just——"

"Oh, yes, I know," Oliver continued, his hand on the door-knob. "But I'm going out just a minute; shall be back in an hour—two hours at the outside. Then you'll see; I'm going to pitch in."

He threw open the door. "Wait! hold on—going down, there! going down!" And he vanished.

Sam worked on, as usual. With the morning's first mail had come another roll of proof from Miss Nielsen. This he always examined with somewhat more than a critical interest, yet ever with growing wonder at its every marginal mark—as though she would put all her life into this one little book! Yet whilst he read, oftentimes, the conviction would grow strong within him that she was never to write anything else, or at least of any account. He had often been struck with this same note of subtle finality in the first work of new writers that the blind world hailed as promising. Sometimes, indeed, it was this pernicious promise that spoiled them; nothing ever appearing quite the same to their souls afterwards, hence the mirror grew false. Not that their books sold no more; oh, no! quite the contrary; anything of theirs would sell then, after long ceasing to be worth the price. And so with her, perhaps. Ah, me, he shuddered, she might even have to resort to the historical. Think of that, now—the historical! Even now she had made alterations in the *Rhapsodist* that caused him to frown as he read. If she were here in the city he might warn her, perhaps, reflecting how they had already been gone three months. Still, he would not write, was decidedly opposed to it; yet if something would only happen to bring them home——

He picked up the morning's paper and began searching it hastily. Here it is, he said: "His sentence commuted;" his first thought being to mark the article and mail it; but no, that would never do, might even be construed as meddlesome. So he merely folded the paper, wrapped and directed it, and sat thinking a moment idly. So Professor Moore was to be released—next week. How

strangely it read, the words in cold print! Were we living in Russia or the United States, that this student of life who had sworn that black was black and stuck to it was now about to be released after four months' imprisonment? And would he be the same, quite, with a laugh at affairs that was sharper than scolding; or would he be vindictive, bitter? Would he be more than a man; was ever an organism more than the sum of its environmental forces? No; he would have fair cause to be bitter, increasing with every day, perhaps, should he now, as was probable, be denied by society the merest right to live at all. Hence now, if ever, must those who believed in him prove their friendship, their support. Realising this, Kent had only the week before written a vigorous reply to the tirade of a certain capitalist, who had deprecated with horror the growing discontent of the populace, who feared anarchy, and advised an immediate increase in the army for the protection of himself and his kind. In his answer to this Kent had for the nonce ceased speaking in parable, had declared boldly that the only anarchy to be discovered by an intelligent observer in our social and economic life of to-day was the anarchy of capital; had dwelt with considerable merriment upon that holy-of-holies known as the "common sense" of successful business men; alleging that theirs was not common sense at all, but merely common ignorance, which gave rise to their absurd assumption that industrial life was stationary; that conditions to-day were as they always had been in the past and always must be in the future. Thence he went on to speak to the intelligent business man as to a little child; took him by the hand and led him beside great aggregations of capital on the one hand and millions of labourers half-paid or unemployed on the other. Lifting the

economic curtain before his unwilling eyes, he had closed with that awful word, fraught with the darkest forebodings of evil to follow: Evolution!

To which Kent had signed his own name, with the reflection that, let come what might, the time was surely near at hand when men who knew the truth and believed as he did should let the public know it. The article had appeared in one of the more liberal morning papers, and in less than three days afterwards had come letters from no less than fifty of the subscribers to the *Literary Sun* ordering him to cancel their subscriptions forthwith. Dilettantes and clubmen, who frankly admitted that they had long enjoyed the dazzle and glow of the *Sun*, but who now took issue with its editor, squarely; with this Samuel Kent, critic and dreamer, the man who wrote wickedly and maliciously of industrial evolution, when at heart he meant socialism pure and simple. The next thing they knew he would be sanctioning any new and outrageous scheme for defrauding them and picking their pockets under this knavish and unchristianly pretense of evolution. Evolution, forsooth! Which letters, of course, Sam had taken infinite pains to keep out of Oliver's hands, fearing to over-excite him.

At noon he handed the addressed newspaper to the postman, and on the second morning thereafter Nannette had hastily torn open the wrapper and scanned its contents, reading only the headlines—how else could one read all that stuff every day? Yet at one of them she came to a pause, the paper ceased to rustle for an instant. "What is it Nannette?" Enid asked. At which she had handed her the paper, folded close to the heading, "His Sentence Commuted."

That same afternoon they had started home. Yes, now she could go to him, not scrupling to

show her sympathetic regard, frank support, even in the face of society bent to an interrogation point of agonising expectancy; could go to him as she felt certain he would have been sure to come to her were she in trouble—she being weak and he strong. But as to the manner of his acceptance she had never paused to consider; at any rate not till that first meeting—his strange greeting at the curb as she alighted from her carriage. Cinderella indeed! Though at first she had taken it seriously, with pleasure at the implied compliment and humorous conceit of his mood. But shortly afterward he had excused himself, leaving her sitting there chatting aimlessly with Julia and her husband whilst he wandered off for a walk; she had seen him go past the window, hands clasped behind him, eyes fast on the ground.

“But what did he say to you, anyway?” Nannette persisted, as Enid sat there, saying nothing, seeming strangely perplexed and disconcerted as the result of her call.

“Well, I told you all he said,” Enid answered, her toe tapping the carpet with annoyance. “Or no, I forgot,” she subjoined with a laugh as she rose. “He told me not to lose my slipper.”

“Good heavens!”—But Enid had left the room and was half-way up the stairs.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE RIGHT TO LIVE.

“Is the president in?”

Several days had passed ere Kenneth could bring himself to the point of presenting those letters

given him by Mr. Ludington; not indeed till he had called at various other places, seemingly more in his line, in the vain search for work, being invariably refused and with scant notice taken of his application, had he at last entered the tiled and barred and mahogany-stalled room on the main floor of one of the largest of the down-town banks, and paused at the teller's window. That individual scanned him closely before answering, having received instructions to be always watchful and wary of strangers. The world was at warfare; politely, of course, in a gentlemanly way, the legions being armed with pens rather than halberds; still, the generals in command were certainly not lightly to be approached in their very tents or headquarters without the stranger's being challenged to see that he gave the proper pass-word.

"Have you a letter, sir?"

Kenneth felt in his pocket and drew forth several, among them being one with Mr. Ludington's name on the envelope. The teller saw it, and in a twinkling every clerk in the room was bowing to the floor; he fancied he heard their foreheads strike the marble tiling with a click—or was it only the gold falling over the counter in a metallic shower? Marvelous anatomy! miraculous anomaly! How many of these well-groomed clerks, he wondered, who spent their week-days calculating the profits of usury, and their Sundays, some of them, in vague awe and respect of Christianity never quite understood, ever reminded themselves of that olden drama of Christ and the money-lenders at war in the temple? Probably not one of them; besides, what was the use? Why should young men torment their souls nowadays with traditional whisperings of the impracticable Christ?

Taking Kenneth's letter, the chief clerk conduct-

ed him to the president's private office, bowed and withdrew. "Ah, from Mr. Ludington," said the president, glancing at the envelope ere he unfolded the letter. "Please have a seat, Mr.—er—Mr.——" He read the letter hastily and rose from his chair. "My dear Mr. Moore," he continued with a smile as he pressed the young man's hand, "I am delighted to meet you. Any friend of Mr. Ludington's is always more than welcome at our office. Pray tell me how I can best serve you." His forehead in turn hit the floor.

Kenneth flushed. He hadn't realised that it was going to be like this. Why in the deuce hadn't Mr. Ludington explained? The president took him for a heavy depositor, he perceived at once, with rising mortification as his eyes travelled swiftly over the contents of the room and rested a moment on an old-fashioned print of Alexander Hamilton—a memory that he thoroughly detested, yet invariably evoking a counter picture of the now thoroughly aroused and conscientious Jefferson speaking in terms of no doubtful significance relative to Hamilton's machinations and aristocratic scheming. But of course all bankers worshipped Alexander Hamilton—he shouldn't have forgotten that.

"I have called, he began, steadying himself as best he could, "to ask about the bank's——"

"Ah, yes, yes; a thousand pardons," the president interposed, pressing a bell-button, "you wish to see a statement first. Perfectly natural, Mr. Moore; perfectly natural, I assure you." A clerk entered the office. "Mr. Barnes, please see if the morning statement is prepared yet; if not, then yesterday's will suffice"—turning to Kenneth, lips parted, eyes starting wide with invitation; "yesterday's will suffice, I presume, Mr. Moore? Yes

—yes, I thought so. Yes, Mr. Barnes, yesterday's will suffice if the morning's isn't quite ready."

The clerk bowed, "Very well, sir," and withdrew.

"You understand, Mr. Moore, we always try to have our statement out within an hour after opening for business every morning," the president explained, dangling his gold eye-glasses a moment between himself and this new-found depositor, then again placing them on his nose and peering sharply at Kenneth as if he would learn whether by any mischance or too hasty calculation he had placed too high an estimate on this modest friend of that wealthy old gentleman, Mr. Amos Ludington. Howbeit he appeared quite satisfied, consulting his watch directly as if impatient at the delay. "I really beg your pardon, Mr. Moore, it is now—er—eleven o'clock. Yes," he admitted, though loathfully, holding the watch in his hand and rubbing his thumb across the crystal, "it is a quarter past. But we have been driven to death lately, our clerks are all worn out and fairly overworked. Yes, I assure you it is overwork, Mr. Moore. No one will suffice for this institution who makes a practice of being up nights; clubs, theatres, horse-races, no, I assure you, sir, such men will never suffice in the world for a great banking business like ours. Such habits ruin the eye, dull the brain, blunt the conscience, all the finer sensibilities are annihilated, utterly annihilated. But as a matter of record, Mr. Moore, you will find that nearly all our clerks are members of the Y. M. C. A.; our chief clerk is superintendent of the Sunday-school in the Park Avenue Presbyterian Church. You observed, of course, that they are a fine-looking and intellectual lot of young men; a most exemplary set, sir, and they—er—generally suffice for all the strain that we are capable of putting upon them; that is, sir, that is to say—ah,

here's the statement. Is it this morning's Mr. Barnes?"

Mr. Barnes bruised his forehead: "Yes, your Majesty," and backed out.

The president took the statement and adjusted his glasses: "Now here we have——"

"But, sir," Kenneth protested, "I fear I am taking up too much of your time, and inasmuch——"

"Oh no, no, not in the least, Mr. Moore, I am entirely at your service," he insisted. Ah, his customer was getting wary, didn't like their looks, perhaps; but he must hold him. He was a friend of Mr. Ludington's. The statement would doubtless fix him all right. "On the contrary, Mr. Moore, I must apologise for detaining you," he continued, smiling obsequiously. "But this statement will explain everything. Here you see it: Resources and Liabilities. Item: time-loans on security, three millions; three-two-five-naught-nine-eight, and sixty-seven. Item: bonds—mostly government, sir—two millions, seven-nine-four-two-seven-three, and twenty-two. Item: cash on hand, one million, eight-nine-eight-five-one-four, and one cent. But you see how it runs, Mr. Moore. It's a pretty statement, now, isn't it, sir—one that should fairly suffice for any institution?"

"Why, yes, sir, as far as my judgment goes," Kenneth stammered modestly; "but I merely called to see if you were in need of any more help?"

"More help?" echoed the president; "I don't understand, Mr. Moore. Of course we always welcome a new depositor, but—but you can see we are in no immediate fear of any financial stringency, sir. A little flurry last summer, perhaps, but everything is all right now. No, sir, I think I may safely say that we are in need of no help, Mr. Moore."

Kenneth was getting desperate, beginning to feel

lost and ashamed; that native manliness that had so inspired the president to unbosom himself upon his entrance was beginning to desert him. "But I mean, sir," he objected, "help among the clerks; do you need any more bookkeepers, or—or anything? I want a position."

"Oh—" the president gasped, dropping back in his chair.

Would his infernal astonishment never cease? Kenneth wondered. How small he seemed in the sight of all these monumental figures! Why, he was not as big as that poor little penny at the bottom of the "Cash on Hand!" Still, the bank did a large business, the president had just been boasting of it, admitting that his clerks were driven to death and overworked. Yes, they surely must need more help.

"Let me see," said the president, recovering, "what did I do with Mr. Ludington's letter?" He searched the papers on his desk, found it, and again perused it hastily, a frown on his face as he looked up. "My mistake, Mr. Moore," he remarked curtly. "You must be a very dear friend of his from the way he refers to you. But have you ever done any work in a bank?"

The young man confessed that he had not.

"Then I fear," continued the president, directly, "that it will be impossible for us to—to use you in any way. You see, our men always start in as boys, from the age of fourteen to sixteen, and grow up with us. It would scarcely be fair, consequently, for us to employ an outsider. For this reason, I may say that we never have a position open to a man of your age."

Kenneth said nothing, wondering if it could be possible that his economic value to society, at the

age of thirty, was actually less than a boy's at the age of fourteen.

The president rose. "Yes, that's the way it is, Mr. Moore," he began briskly, his manner implying regret at the moments already wasted as he busied himself with the papers held in one hand, including the morning statement; but once more recollecting that auspicious introductory letter, he subjoined, apologetically, "Though of course if Mr. Ludington should insist, you know, if he should really insist we might possibly create a position of some sort." Whereupon Kenneth thanked him, remarking, however, that he didn't think Mr. Ludington would insist; in fact, he knew he wouldn't.

"Well, come in and see me again, Mr. Moore, I shall always be pleased to talk with you. Give my kindest regards to Mr. Ludington. Good-morning;" and the president resumed his duties, wholly unconscious of the fact that he belonged to that self-sufficient set who argued on every occasion that there was no use of any young man being out of work who really wanted it. That idea was the merest rant of blatant demagogues. There was plenty of work; let the young man look elsewhere!

Kenneth had letters to three other bank presidents; one of which he presented with a similar result, save that the man was not so courteous. Mr. Ludington's deposit or stock, possibly, was a little below par at present. Still, all their men started as boys; there was absolutely no chance for him there. And so it was with the remaining banks, where he inquired merely at the first window but always to meet with the same refusal. At the sixth bank he quit, seized with despair, agreeing at last that he was too old; there was plainly no hope for

an old man like him to become a banker. He must look elsewhere.

"I'm not sure, Kenneth," Holden had objected as his friend came home bringing report of his failure to find an opening—"I'm not sure but you are making a great mistake by wasting your time in searching. After all, you can't blame the bankers, you know, nor other business men; nearly all their employes do start as boys, and anyway your training has been so different that it makes it utterly impossible for you to find work as a clerk. Why don't you just sit down and wait, write magazine articles, prepare a text-book, or do anything! Things will come your way again after awhile, you know."

Kenneth shook his head. If Holden were rich, he conceded that such a course might be fairly endurable; feeling in truth that someday he would be back in college, teaching, and lecturing publicly. Even now one perceived that he had not been so very far ahead of the day, as various cities throughout the country were framing new charters in the line of municipal ownership, thus proving, as he had long contended, that as economic relations multiplied with our growth and development, so too must the state and municipality keep pace in a constantly widening sphere of usefulness, seeking ever the greatest benefit to the greatest number. Still, Kenneth knew that he was for the present *persona non grata*; his refusal of a position at the hands of every large university was enough to prove this; and as for trying to subsist on the fruits of magazine articles, such, of course, was impossible. For who would care to read what he had to say, and where was the magazine so free of capitalistic taint and corruption as to dare publish an article by a man who swore up-and-down that poverty was not designed by God? And if not by God,

in an alleged cursed and unfruitful world, then by whom? Once indeed he had made answer to this insistent query through the columns of a well-known magazine, but this was before the strike and his subsequent dismissal from the Rockland University. For this article he had received in payment a check for fifty dollars; had consequently followed it up with another—which was promptly returned with thanks. Even yet well-known economists of the orthodox faith were busy disproving his fallacies, maintaining in magazine and newspaper that poverty, like hades, *was* designed by God, and that none save a heretic would ever have dared to question it and its manifest beneficences!

“No, Henry, there’s no use in my trying to live that way,” he replied finally. “I’m not in the humour for writing and nothing of mine would sell now anyway. So I must find something else to do temporarily, it matters little what. After all, there are enough places I could fill if I had them—don’t you think so?”

“Oh, if you had them, doubtless,” his friend was forced to agree. “But there’s the rub. You know there are hundreds of clerks out of work the same as other people. How are you to find what they can’t?”

Howbeit he kept on seeking, would take no rebuff or refusal; that same pugnacious spirit that had pervaded his work in the university now buoyed him up as he walked the streets in search of a job. He found, besides, as he had protested to Holden, that there were innumerable positions that he might have filled competently, to the satisfaction of any employer, could he only have had the chance to apply his labour. Day after day he made the rounds of factories, stores, and buildings where labour was employed; answering advertisements at

night, and starting out early each morning only to find himself one of a crowd of from fifty to a hundred young men standing in line every morning for that much coveted yet unattainable position. And even here he learned that nine-tenths of the positions advertised were only out-and-out fakes—"agencies" and schemes for selling everything, from books to real-estate, to people who wanted neither, with the promise of a most seductive commission in return; frauds for the profitable fleecing of the young man from the country alone in the city in search of a job, calling regularly in answer to the standing advertisement:

"Young man wanted who can loan his employer five hundred dollars and take a position in splendid business at seventy-five dollars a month; money fully secured."

It took time, of course, and some little test of good temper ere he had caught on to all those innumerable pitfalls for the unwary, who, forced to have work, were driven headlong by their very necessities into parting with that little money which they could so ill afford to lose, and in schemes so bare-faced and preposterous as to make them feel themselves fools for years afterward. This business, naturally, constituted a large source of revenue to the *Republican* and other first-class papers that filled their columns and whole pages with such advertisements; reminding Kenneth more forcibly every day that there was no iniquity under the sun but had its basis in our false economics, that wherever there was profit to be made would fraud and dishonesty be found invariably—the larger the profits the greater the fraud, that was all, and the more costly the cloak chosen to cover it! Newspapers, peers of the realm, ministers of the gospel, they were all for sale to the highest bidder to advertise anything

from a patent medicine or rotten bicycle tire up to the last great "trust," as recent revelations had proved. "Dishonesty is the life of trade, Henry," he had sighed one night on returning.

Holden shook his head. "We are living on the face of a volcano. Some day there'll be an eruption."

But he smiled incredulously. "No, that's what I used to think; but it's a mistake after all. Do you remember how we saw people living on the slopes of Vesuvius? Well, I don't suppose they would live anywhere else for the world. They are used to it; when the panic or crisis comes they give way inch by inch, keeping their toes fairly on the line of lava, then settle down again same as before. So it goes."

At the larger stores and factories where he applied it was only after the greatest persistency that he was able to speak with the managers at all. Men seeking work had become an intolerable nuisance, they gave him to understand, and generally with the subjoinder that they had really never known a time when there were so many tramps knocking round! "Why, it's something perfectly awful the way they come, you know," one clerk had said to him after hearing his business. To which he agreed that it was, left his name and address, and went on. At the huge department store of Moses, Jones and Co., where the hawk-faced Hebrew of myth and legend sat cheek-by-jowl with his Yankee partner, he found a guard stationed before the manager's office who returned always the same answer that no more help was wanted—and that anyway they preferred children.

So the November days came on dark and dour; the little money that he had was gone, and as for continuing to live at the expense of Holden,

this, he felt, was impossible. He knew that his friend had not collected a dollar since settling in Wildwood, and that his outlook, aside from a little money saved out of his Wheeling practice, was fully as precarious and unpromising as his own. Moreover he always felt a sense of blame and regret when thinking of the physician, holding it largely his fault that his friend had been made to pay forfeit in this manner by taking part with the workmen at Wheeling. He should have kept his friends out of his battles, he thought, resolving in future to have no more entanglements; knowing the world to be so constituted that no man could afford to tell the truth where men's money is invested, without risking the gravest penalties for his temerity. More than ever, then, was he spurred to find some means by which he could keep their little household alive until Holden could again acquire practice. Yet when all was told he was beginning at last to despair. At first the city had seemed so large and there was so much work in progress around him that it scarcely seemed plausible he should find nothing at all to do. But gradually he perceived his opportunities growing narrower; those innumerable places that had once seemed available to him, in the simplicity of his inexperience, had all been searched and found hopeless—some one was already there. He still continued to call, however; had gone to Kent, even, and obtained letters of introduction to various publishers and book-sellers; but only to meet everywhere with the same persistent refusal. Now and then, it is true, some one kinder than common would take his application and sympathetically advise him to "drop in again about Christmas;" the mere mention of that propitious period, season of angels and anglers, of costly presents and goodly profits,

wherein the robber delights to give up to the robbed for a day, with a turkey from the meat-trust, a ton of coal to the pauper from the coal-trust, and the like, midst the glare of churches and the chanting of "O night divine when Christ was born!"—the mere mention of that period causing him to feel, somehow, a momentary gladness, vague sense of relief and security, but which was suddenly extinguished on again seeking the street as being simply a passing glimpse of that persistent ghost that shadows one and plays irresponsible pranks with the understanding long after the red substance of superstition has burned to a dull ash in the mind. Till at last he came not only to feel but to know, beyond question—when all his soul was a-sob with the shame and the pain of it—that there was no such thing as an available position for him or other men out of work in that city; and that should one man now and then succeed in finding something to do, such would be but the merest freak, the exception that proved the rule in this industrial chaos where men perforce had no opportunity to work for themselves but must first seek and beg and even starve until they chanced to find a master who wanted them for his own profit and would generously allow them a small portion of the produce of their labour whereby to live in the meantime. And thinking of it so he would often recall those plans which he had meant to put into effect, what time this reality was only a studied yet conscientious conviction instead of being, as now, a thing of too pressing experience; plans for the starting of municipal industries, factories, farms, training-schools, the elaboration of the idea already proved practicable in many a municipal potato-patch; where any man, woman or child that wanted it could find a comfortable home and employment

for a day or a life-time. But no, he had been thwarted; every employer of labour had opposed such a scheme as tending to put an end to the army of unemployed and so likely to raise the rate of wages to a ruinous degree; opposed it the same as they had fought against convict labour and produce, which they admitted to be a good thing for the convicts as teaching them useful trades, but a disastrous thing to themselves. Aye, the old, old story of industrial warfare, the victors eternally opposing any and all measures looking towards peace, with the selfish prevision that peace must at last necessitate their own unconditional surrender. Even the one benevolent individual whom he had depended upon the most had looked askance at the idea and finally deserted him; had made over his hundred thousand of dollars to the Rockland University, thus helping to equip a telescope whereby students might calmly study the stars whilst men went on starving round him.

In spite of this, he had to adjust himself to the order of things as existing; had not even the right to complain, much less rebel or become mutinous to the point of doing nothing. It was his part to act, to prove his right to live, his fitness, perchance, even in the midst of things hated and scorned. So again he read over the advertisements of "men wanted," calling at various places and resolving at last, after much earnest persistency on the part of the proprietor, to try his hand selling a new-fangled mop-handle. It purported to be the "finest thing on the American market," as was seductively set forth in a printed prospectus which he was to learn and commit to memory, repeating as he called from door to door. It sold—the mop-handle—for two dollars, half of which he was to keep as commission. Several of the agents had sold as many as

six in one day, so the proprietor alleged, with the implication that any active young man could do as well or even better. Whereupon Kenneth had decided that he would work half a day at a time and make three dollars, which would be ample for him and allow him to put the remainder of the day on work he had planned for himself.

"Our agents always pay for the handles as they take them," observed the proprietor in a business-like fashion. "One dollar, please. Thank you—here's your receipt. We hope you will be successful."

Kenneth picked up the thing and passed out.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE VARIETY-SHOW.

"Good heavens! what are you doing with that?"

Having spent the morning soliciting customers for that matchless mop-handle, albeit without success, he was passing through the park seeking territory beyond, which was peopled with a class dwelling in flats, and who, he hoped, might be more favourably disposed toward his "goods" than the wealthy folk along the boulevards whence he had just come, when he perceived coming towards him a victoria containing two young women. Unfortunately for himself, they had recognised him first, as he went trudging on, eyes bent to the ground and fraught with reflections the strangest and most unusual; giving him no time to turn about, to run, to pitch that malevolent mop-handle into the nearest lagoon, and so be able to meet the challenge in their salute with all the strength

and resistance of manhood surprised but defiant. Recovering himself as best he could, therefore, he replied, toying the while with the elegant nickel-plated clamp on the end of the handle—

“What! with this? Oh, I’m about to mop out the Augean stables.”

Enid glanced at Nannette, who bit her lip, then burst into unavoidable laughter. Enid frowned. “Dear me! I hoped you were done with that sort of thing, Kenneth!” she exclaimed, between compassion and indignation.

He shook his head. “Oh, no, not at all. Indeed I’ve only fairly begun this morning. I believe this thing will do the business all right—don’t you? By the way, what is your day at home? I’m coming to sell you one before long. Positively the finest thing on the American market, with improvements not to be found on any other handle; all of which are fully protected by patent, and people selling or using the same will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Please note, lady, how the clamp——”

“Oh stop!” cried Nannette. “How much is it, professor?”

“Only two dollars, lady,” he persisted, ignoring the title she had long given him by habit. “Only two dollars, one of which goes to me and the other to the mop-handle.”

Enid caught the flash in his eye as he paused, satirical still, but with no answering light in her own. Something rose in her throat instead, and stuck there, robbing the scene of its poor pretense at humour and leaving him standing before her more nearly as he was—bitter, chagrined, discouraged, and withal shabbily pathetic. Was it possible, she asked herself swiftly, that he could find nothing better to do than that? Though the

only reply she gave him was,—with a nod of the head, and something tell-tale yet sweetly memorable about the mouth—“Very well; call to-morrow, please,” and drove on.

He followed the drive in its winding course through the park, slowly; near the entrance of one of the boulevards he found a deserted settee where he paused to rest for a moment. It was early in the afternoon of one of the first warm days in November; the sunlight slanted through bare branches and lit for an instant a tiny plot near him where the grass was again growing green, mistaking the oncoming winter for spring. It caught his fancy. Even nature has its little mistakes to answer for, he reflected; and it was false, that nonsense of Shakspeare's that we were all actors—every tender blade of grass gave it the lie! Some people, it is true, could deny the Force that surrounded them and pass through life unresponsive and unlistening, hence were actors truly enough; yet others there were who moved always in obedience to this Force, reckless of consequences. Well, he was not prepared to say which was preferable, wholly; but at any rate he felt strangely drawn towards that little life-mirroring spot of green grass. It had made a mistake; should have refused to come up. Winter would nip it anon, and it was powerless to protect itself. Actors, forsooth; What Shakspeare needed in his philosophy was more biology and less sentiment. Still, all men might have to *learn* to be actors, he granted, in order to live at all; perhaps that was what the poet meant. But if so it was nothing to boast of or repeat, surely.

The usual afternoon parade, to be expected on any pleasant day, was beginning to pass; luxurious coaches and fashionable turnouts swept by him; in

one of which was a party of four, vis-a-vis, three pretty women whom he observed, thinking at first that he knew them, and a man of swarthy complexion, carefully trimmed Van Dyke, bright eyes, withal rather striking. He fancied he had met him also. And then—why, of course, it was Professor Cline, who had succeeded him in the Rockland University as professor of sociology, and, having lately returned from abroad, had startled the listening world through an interview contained in the *Republican* to the effect that the cause of social democracy was rapidly dying out in Germany and other European countries! Kenneth recalled the contempt with which he had read the lie at the time. Professor Cline's salary had been doubled, he understood. Turning, he watched the party drive on, with its lean immaculately conceived coachman and ridiculous fat little footman in glove-fitting breeches. The carriage presently descended a slight grade and the horses directly disappeared, then the carriage—all save the box; leaving the fat little footman hovering there for a moment as though floating jauntily in mid-air. There were three deep transverse wrinkles in the back of his plutocratic neck where his coat collar left off and his silk hat began. Kenneth counted them disappear, "one, two, three," with a laugh. "Rapidly dying out," he sighed once more half aloud.

But no, such was not the spirit to view it, his place at present was to learn to accept things as they were; nay, more, to find some——

"Como te va, senor. Celebro mucho de verte."

He turned; someone had approached along the gravel walk at his side, yet so silently, or so absorbed had he been, that he was unaware of the presence of any one near till the lisping syllables saluted him. Glancing up, he discovered with sur-

prise, that was not unalloyed with pleasure, that the speaker was old Pedro. "Won't you sit down?" he asked, returning his greeting, and adding as the old man murmured his thanks and complied: "Well, how do you find business nowadays?"

Whereupon Pedro protested, with some little difficulty between his Spanish and English, that business, on the whole, was fair, that he had nothing to complain of; which caused the young man at his side to scrutinise him with a moment's amused curiosity, remembering what Goldsmith-Smith had once said about seeing old Pedro hauled up at the police court charged with receiving stolen goods. He was still thinking of this, abstractedly, when the old man interrupted his reflections by reminding him of his mop-handle, and querying, with now equal curiosity on his part, what Kenneth was doing with that!

"Oh, with that?" he answered honestly. "Why, then, I'm selling it, Pedro—selling it. Do you happen to know any one who wants to buy one?" subjoining, with the morning's effort and training, "Positively the finest thing on the American market." Whereat the old man smiled, thought he was jesting and refused to believe it. At last, however, he was convinced. "*Caramba!*" he cried, with sudden indignation; and directly, in spontaneous access of sympathy, which struck his companion as being an amusing yet characteristic instance of the emotional generosity of the Latin, he cried:

"Listen, señor! I have money—more than I wish. Ask any one—they will tell you Pedro has money!"

Kenneth shook his head, rose abruptly from the seat. The old beggar's solicitude and charity, despite the humour, seemed scarcely fitting or agree-

able. That he should be reduced to prompting gifts from a beggar! Had he really become as shabby and helpless as all that, and did his very appearance proclaim it—to all the world? But noting how the old man's face darkened with disappointment, hurt, perhaps, at his rudeness, he answered: "No Pedro; I'm much obliged, I'm sure. But I don't need any money. I'm just selling this thing for fun, for experience, you know. Good-by; I must walk on."

"No? But wait, señor!" An instant's surprise, credulity even, and the old man had risen, caught him by the sleeve. "*Sientese!*" he beseeched. "Señor, I swear it, by the holy Virgin, the money is as honest as any money ever made in Chicago!"

The vehemence of the protest, as well as the curious aptness of the comparison chosen, fairly swept Kenneth off his feet; yielding good-naturedly to the old fellow's pressure, he again sat down, answering the while, with a laugh:

"Believe me, Pedro, I do not doubt it; I admit, on general principles, that your money is fully as honest as—as any ever made in Chicago. But I tell you I don't want it—can't use it. Do you understand?" Meanwhile the fear galloped through his mind that possibly the old man had gone crazy; men in general did not give away their money like this, in momentary compassion for every unfortunate young fellow found selling a mop-handle.

Yet for a few moments he sat there, listening curiously, whilst the old man talked on. A peculiar tale, and erratic; but replete with adventure, experience, wherein he attempted still to prove, despite appearances to the contrary, that his business and its emoluments were fully as honest, though possibly not as legitimate, as any other. Once,

indeed, he had been engaged in a straightforward and reputable business on first coming to America many years ago, but out of which he was deliberately swindled by one of those legitimate tricks so common to the industrial world—world wherein success or defeat in general is confessedly independent of skill, devotion, or diligence, or any quality whatsoever higher than merest haphazard chance or chicanery. Losing his money, therefore, Pedro had been obliged to sell himself to a padrone, leaving his wife to get along as best she could in an ignorant, helpless way in the midst of an inhospitable society. God, perhaps, would take care of her, even as he takes care of others. Which means that when Pedro had at last purchased his freedom his wife had died of starvation; and he and his daughter were upon the street making a scanty living as street-musicians. Eventually the girl too had left him—there had been times when he drank and abused her.

Aye, a worthless fellow enough, Kenneth pondered; yet was there still an undeniable trace of nobility in the old man, a spark inherited from birth, perchance, thence backward along a noble line to the earliest Aryan fathers. For he was not a Spaniard, he had declared proudly, but a Basque; one of that race whose fathers had fought under the generals of freedom all the way from Hannibal to Wellington, had cut to pieces the flank of Charlemagne's army; and when Caesar had sent his conquering legions into their liberty-loving country had not Crassus, his lieutenant, reported: "A few petty people higher up in the mountains did not make their submission and sent no hostages."

A half an hour later Kenneth was again hurrying along the crowded downtown streets of the city, but with mind finally resolved and convinced.

All the way in on the street-car, old Pedro's story had clung to him, somehow, with its parody of struggle and apathy, defeat and success, honour and fraud, peddling and plundering. Yet coming as it did to his economic eye, he could do no less than admit that Pedro was very much as other men, after all. He was merely an actor, with no more power than the average to choose the rôle he would perform whatever might be his inclinations: tragedians, comedians, and parody-clowns, the scholar, the financier, and the preacher, what one of them all could say, "I shall select my own lines and recite them as my conscience impels." Alas! not one; and what was worse, people were ceasing to expect that the variety-show should have any honesty. It was run for profits, the actors admitted it every one who had the least vestige of reason or honour. And so, at last, with himself, he now saw that if he were to go through life at all it must be in the guise of the actor. He must learn the lines that society set for him—whilst that thing which fools call Fate continued to pull the string!—speaking them on all occasions; never saying one honest word outside of that inner circle of his midmost soul; must conceal his every scientific sociologic conviction as best he could. It was all part of that destined drama of his life; in time, perhaps, he should become a great actor—a great tragedian; or at least be able to command a salary sufficient to assist for awhile those whom his own friendship and poor acting had embarrassed. And again Mabel's words swept over him, words that had hurt him more than he would ever confess to a living soul. "Oh, Kenneth, you have ruined my life!" Yes, he had done so; and simply by refusing to perform his part in the hated variety-show. Though once, but a few

months back, he would have protested stoutly against this judgment as held by the world in general; could see himself even now standing on every street corner in turn, greeted with satirical laughter whilst he impotently lifted his voice to explain, that No! the wind was the cause of his misfortunes, not himself. Fool! Was the dead leaf caught up by the storm to protest that it had no wings, when any fool could see that it flew like a bird in the air?

A beggar, gray-whiskered, one-legged, ragged, the very essence of the world's misery and economic disease,—world that first maimed and then cast him out, and now sweeping past flaunting its iniquity in his dead soul's face,—sat squat on the sidewalk at one of the splendid department store corners. In his hand was a small tin cup, feebly clasped; yet he uttered no word, no moan—the sight of him being his sole solicitation. Kenneth felt in his pocket instinctively, but found nothing, gasped in helpless despair, and hurried on.

Coming to the corner where stood the *Republican* building, he paused a second, then entered and asked to see the managing-editor, and was shown to a room on the third floor. Here he handed the office-boy the letter of introduction given him several weeks ago by Mr. Ludington, waited a few moments, and was presently ushered into the sanctum.

“Ah, you are Mr. Moore; Professor Moore, I believe?” The managing-editor held out his hand with ready cordiality, causing Kenneth to wonder an instant at its pressure, at the man's affability, especially as the inconvenient recollection just then swept over him that this pleasant-voiced being was the same who had once referred to him—a year ago, perhaps—as “that addle-pated demagogue

and aberrant abolitionist.”—“Mr. Ludington states that you would like to try your hand at editorial-writing?”

Kenneth nodded, gravely. “Yes, I think so; that is, if there is any opening where you could use me.”

For answer the editor glanced at him swiftly, immediately hitching his chair a trifle nearer his caller, the muscles of his face relaxing agreeably as he began to speak in low-toned assurance, his manner implying already the most felicitous confidence and understanding. “You see, Professor Moore, a great newspaper can always use a strong writer. Now I am perfectly aware what your views are, and I want to tell you this, frankly, that when a man goes to work on a newspaper he must understand that he has conveyed all rights in his intellect and such persuasive powers as he may have to the corporation that pays his wages. Why, look at me; I am managing-editor of this paper, yet I really have no right whatever to express my own honest convictions on any matter of public concern. No; my function is to see, simply, that whatever goes into this paper conforms to its policy. I suppose you know, of course, that every great newspaper or magazine has a policy, a constitution that must be sustained at all times. Well, we who write for the paper do not make this policy; it is made for us by the corporation that owns us. Do you understand?”

“Perfectly. The explanation is quite needless,” Kenneth assured him.

The editor smiled. “Very well, I’m glad of that,” he continued; for I hated, somehow, to have you think, as was natural, that newspaper-men are as bad as the stuff they write—wanted you to feel, you know, that we are merely, for the greater part,

sometimes clever yet absolutely impersonal and ambidextrous automata." Again Kenneth recalled the editor's penchant for the alliterative *a*, and smiled: Addle-pated amber-haired abolitionist, forsooth! But he knew the source of it now, and for an instant it was unction to his soul to have added unto it the originator's own deprecatory description of himself—one of a class of absolutely impersonal and ambidextrous automata! Impersonal? Yes, the editor's manner left no doubt of that; and as if divining his thoughts, he proceeded: "You doubtless remember that we have had occasion to refer to you a few times in the past, Mr. Moore. Well, it is perhaps only fair to say that nearly every man in this office agrees with you. We see so much of the lie, you know, in everything, that we are all social heretics. However, I have no one at present who is able to furnish me the leaders I need in sociology. I have been looking out for such a writer for some time; I believe you could do the work." Hesitating a moment, he added, squarely: "For example, now, I want a strong article of say one thousand words for to-morrow's issue, showing the fallacy of municipal ownership. Do you think you could write it at once?"

No need to answer that! A man in his position could write anything, and at once. Being assigned to a desk, he wrote out his manuscript steadily, sheet after sheet, his tongue in his cheek the while. It was really quite fascinating, such work; leaving as it did, for one as well-versed as himself, such boundless scope for wit and play of satire. The fallacies of municipal ownership! Who, indeed, could speak of them as logically and forcibly as himself? He had only to begin, naturally, with the traditional and monarchical assumption that

the masses were all fools—such as were not all rascals. Hence they—the fools—would never be fit to run their own business for themselves; and accordingly, railroads, street-cars, telephones, gas, and the like, would never be so well conducted as when presided over by millionaire figure-heads drawing enormous salaries. Showed how that thing which demagogues called industrial evolution was the merest myth, the dream of the anarchist, tending to upset all our time-honoured institutions—he didn't forget that! Proved with infinite humour how certain college professors were merely seeking a little cheap notoriety, and in reality feathering their own nests whilst pretending to teach sociology—in fact he knew several whose nests had been so feathered. Spoke of the danger of socialism, not failing to show that every step in the way of municipal ownership was obviously in the direction of socialism—which could never be tolerated by the free American people.

When it was all finished, he read it over, critically, reversing a sentence here and there where he had inadvertently told the truth from long habit, and made it a thing of consistency, that should meet the policy of the *Republican*. Then for awhile he sat there, gazing at the thing satirically between half-closed eyes; wondering one moment how he could have written it, and the next if there were any way by which he could possibly make it stronger. And as he sat there reflecting, the discordant sounds from the street below wailed up to him. It was growing dark. He arose, stepped to the window and glanced out. The rain had begun to drizzle, the November rack floating in from the lake and enveloping the city in its clinging gray mantle, wherethrough the lights shone glimmering. And down below, people whose forms took on the

same glare and varnished appearance, groped in and out, in and out. Across the street one of the great theatres that ran a continuous variety-show was discharging its surfeited crowd. How had the actors performed? he wondered. Had they given satisfaction—all the public actually craved or deserved?

Turning back to his desk he gathered up his manuscript, arranging the sheets in order. This was his goblet of hemlock, perchance, and also his bread of life.

In answer to the editor's "Come in!" he opened the door of the sanctum and handed him the manuscript. "Sit down a moment, please," and he complied whilst the editor read it, slowly, his face giving no sign of approval—once, indeed, it took on a dark frown; causing Kenneth to await the verdict with vague uneasiness. He, perhaps, had mistaken his capabilities; it was not so easy to lie, after all—might require special genius, adaptability, a certain ferment in the blood of which his own nature had nothing.

The editor laid the manuscript on his desk, wearily. "It is excellent," he said, finally, without looking at him. "It is worth thirty dollars a week. I trust that will be satisfactory. Good-night."

He reached the street, plunged into the crowd, and walked—walked like a blind man all of the way home to Wildwood. "Good heavens!" said Holden as he entered. "What has happened?"

He shook his head, dropped into a chair, breathless. "Nothing, old man; nothing! save that I've found a job at last. Isn't supper about ready? I'm hungry as a bear!"

"A job! You don't mean it, do you? I'm confoundedly glad—you know that, Kenneth! But what is it?"

The answer seemed to stick in his throat. "L—lying, principally," he gasped leaning forward, and breaking into a laugh, he added rising, "That is, I've joined the variety-show. Gad! how thirsty it makes a man—at first! Have you any water handy?"

CHAPTER XXVII.

DOUBTFUL SECURITY.

"But you are happier, Kenneth, more contented. I can tell—it makes no difference what you may think to the contrary." It was a stormy night in the middle of March; whilst he and Enid were driving home from the theatre, he had spoken a moment, inadvertently, of his present work, with somewhat of the old frankness and unbelief, even contemptuous amusement. Whence her protest; for with his daily work and daily pay from the *Republican* there had come to him almost from the first a peace of mind and enjoyment that delighted his friends quite as much as it surprised himself. He had known nothing like it for years, being able to live once more as he desired, and carrying on his studies and investigations free from the dictate of any one; had simply to keep that sublime editorial page supplied with the most superficial of sociologic thought, with the property of the few rather than the welfare of the many always uppermost in his mind, and that was all—a task requiring but little effort or time after once falling into the habit of the thing. Some day, perhaps, with the work he had planned, he should be able to make up again to society for the lies he was forced to tell now. Preachers, he instanced, frequently found

it necessary to keep on lying in the old way for awhile on first taking hold of a new congregation, until such a time as they could safely give expression to newer and nobler truths; always making sure of keeping their livings first. Well, he did not blame them—they had to. That which the thoughtless called conservatism he had found, over and over again, to have its tap-root in the dictate of private capital.

“Happier, Enid?” he repeated. “Yes, at this moment, perhaps. Why not?”—adding that thirty dollars a week was a princely income for him, supplying more than enough to run his Wildwood home. “Holden, you see, is still doing nothing. I doubt if he has taken in five dollars in all the time he has been there. But he’ll be all right in a year or two. Then I shall throw up my position, and then——”

He stopped; suddenly reflecting that he had been talking too fast.

“And then?” she asked quietly.

Drawing away slightly, he bent forward, glanced out through the pane. “How it storms!” he said softly. “Don’t you love to see it?”

She shook her head. “Yes; through a glass, perhaps. I fancy it’s not so enjoyable out there on the box. Please don’t be foolish—I wish you would answer my question.”

“Ah, what then?” He laughed lightly. “Why, then you’ll hear something drop, that’s all.” She was silent, knowing in sooth what he meant, as only a short time before he had said to her, impulsively, perceiving how rapidly opinion was growing in favour of all that he stood for, that two-thirds of the people were with him—he knew it! That all he had to do was to reach them, and when the time came that he could finally call himself free

again he should write, should speak, and should organise. In brief, he meant to keep on fighting. She saw that, despite the hope that he might, somehow, change his mind. Other men changed theirs, she knew that; knew, moreover, that he believed in the Law of Change, nay! had even heard him declare it was the only law. But it was this Democracy, this growing Democracy! That, alas, never changed!

The carriage drew up at her home. He opened the door and stepped out, retaining her hand a moment after assisting her. "Nonsense!" as the carriage turned in, perceiving his intention ere he could utter the word. "You surely won't be so silly as to go home in this storm? You know there is lots of room!"

"But Enid, your mother isn't——"

She laughed. "It will keep me awake—the thought of it; your wading home in the slush to satisfy those very conventions which you affect to laugh at and despise. No; mamma won't be home till next week. Men are very queer."

"Um! I don't see what men have to do with it," he protested, as they ascended the stairs. "It's women, eternally women! What did you do with your key? Women talk."

Other people talked, too, that winter; it being commonly rumoured that he spent more time at her home than was socially fair and proper. His Aunt Helen, even, chancing one day to miss his cello from its accustomed place in his own home, had discovered it afterwards in one corner of "that woman's" music-room, laughing at her, in mediæval mockery, like some dark libidinous monk outrageously poking fun at her nineteenth century prudery. The which she declared to be perfectly scandalous. "You know, Edward," she phono-

graphed to her husband one evening whilst he sat intrenched behind that inexorable evening paper—"you know she may be a very good woman, and all that, besides being rich and considered handsome—yes, she is *quite* handsome; but somehow it seems strange, especially when Mabel is all alone away over in London. You saw, of course, what the paper had to say of her singing the other day. No? Let me see, I believe it was in the *Republican*, with the name of some queer London paper at the end. She certainly must be very successful; anyway I always knew she could sing. But now I think it is very poor taste—don't you, Edward?"

The which in general may be accepted as a fair reflection of what other people thought; and though they pounded the crust of their superficialities never so hard, they elicited naught save the usual hollow echoes in return.

But to Holden and Julia, at any rate, Mabel's flight had come as a special dispensation of Providence; the physician had now been in Wildwood nearly a year, had spent all he had, and, save for his friend's assistance, should have been forced to give up long ago and retreat he knew not whither. An occasional call he had had, it is true, but solely among the poorer classes who could not afford to pay. Only a few days before Kenneth had met him as he was coming home. He was passing at the time one of those little cottages in the outskirts of Wildwood; the police-patrol wagon stood waiting there, and a number of men and women, residents of the neighbourhood, poorly attired, their faces drawn with distress, were huddled about the doorway. Whilst he paused, a couple of women came out, sobbing, their faces hid in their aprons.

"What's the trouble, driver?" he had queried of the man on the seat of the patrol-wagon. And

the answer had come, carelessly: "Oh, nothing; it's Bill Harper's wife. She's found her husband." Kenneth glanced at him sharply. Was the finding of a husband cause for such general distress? He was about to question the man further, when Holden came out of the house, carrying his surgeon's bag. They walked on together. "Yes," said the doctor, "it's Bill Harper's wife now. She's having fainting spells—a weak heart, occasioned by lack of nourishment. You see they've just fished her husband's body out of one of the park lagoons. He was an engineer on the C. & N. G., but was boycotted after the strike at Wheeling and failed to find work anywhere. He was buying a home on this eternal monthly payment plan, but had to give it up and move over here. How he and his wife managed to subsist at all the past two months God only knows. He had to beg; go to the charity agents and ask for supplies, when he only wanted work. Well, it must have crazed him. Three days ago he told his wife he was going out to look for work, and never returned."

They walked on in silence, till again the doctor added: "I've been keeping the run of these suicide cases from economic causes lately. This one is the twentieth in this city so far this month—and the month isn't more than half over. The condition is frightful. It haunts me."

His friend glanced at him, with quick solicitude; assuring him, however, that the present condition could not continue. Business would be all right—after awhile, he had said.

And doubtless there were ways for a doctor to survive even here, despite the obvious overcrowding; ways for the smart and discreet.

In speaking of which to Kenneth one morning he had asked vaguely: "Do you think me a fool?"

You see to what the medical profession has descended. Am I a fool to dodge it?"

And his friend had glanced up from his manuscript. "Henry," he said reluctantly, "you know you would never have been guilty even of asking that question were it not for the money involved. You loathe it, and know well enough that it cannot be the proper function of the physician to take human life."

"Yes, yes, of course I know it. But what on earth can I do? I must quit the profession."

"What would you do then, old man—what could you do?"

Knowing well Kenneth's own dire experiences Holden could say nothing.

"And yet, doctor," Kenneth added, "there are excuses for these people; we know it. Society is its own victim; it is destroying itself, laughing and dancing whilst doing so. So long as the economic environment of a people is false, so long must individuals resort to tricks, even to murder, to protect themselves. It is expensive to have large families, and the human race is so poor it can hardly live as things are. However, I shouldn't care to be a doctor myself—not under such circumstances."

Holden came to the defensive. A man may attack his own profession, if he please, but he will permit no outsider to do so. "Yes, I admit it," he cried, "but where is the difference, after all, between the doctor who commits murder, as you call it, for a living, and within the narrow compass of his practice, and the man who organises a trust whereby to control prices and starve people to suicide and destruction. One murders his thousands, the other his tens of thousands—that is all."

Kenneth took up his pen and wrote on. He would not argue that whilst Holden was in his

present frame of mind. Moreover, it was too true. "There can be no possible choice in a business career to-day, Henry," he admitted sadly. "Be a capitalist, a murderer, a common thug, a clergyman, or a physician—it is all the same to the seeing eye. Whilst capital rules it can be no better. A man has not even the right to do right."

Holden passed out; he boarded a car going downtown, and, on arrival, deliberately went from store to store and office to office searching for a position. It were a redundancy to say he was unsuccessful; the veriest tyro in life knows that positions to-day are not to be found in this way, and he himself was conscious of the absolute foolishness of his search; besides, he had often tried it before. Here and there he passed a quack medical institute whose proprietors had thrown honesty to the winds and openly advertised to do the impossible in order to fleece the ignorant. Many of these he knew to be highly successful, whilst he—

"Hello, Henry!"

Some one laid a hand on his shoulder, and he turned. "Ah, how are you, Dunn. Didn't know you were in town." It was an old classmate.

"Yes, just got back from Florida, you know. What are you doing, old man; practising?"

"Yes, plugging along," Holden answered. "And you?"

"Oh, haven't you heard? You know I picked up that ear-drum device when I was over in Vienna; and I've been selling 'em. Two years ago I organised a company, we advertised it in all the leading and most reputable magazines, and sold them for twenty-five dollars a pair. Of course they weren't worth a damn, but the deaf will buy any old thing. I cleared one hundred and fifty thousand

dollars the last eighteen months. I'd quit practise if I were you, old chap. Nothing in it."

Holden gasped. Instances of this sort were becoming so common to him, meeting him at every turn, that he was beginning to lose all confidence in a world of honour. Dunn had been but a poor student, had in fact barely passed his examinations; neither had he any natural ability of the kind to make him useful to the world. But as a creature to prey upon society, to get his living in accordance with the modern precepts of the successful, he was certainly not to be despised.

"Dunn," said he frankly, with access of despair, "I've been devilish unfortunate. I was forced to abandon my practice in a town where I was doing well, and to locate in another place. Consequently I've lost everything I ever had; and, what's more, I have no practice. I don't suppose you could loan me a thousand dollars, could you, till I establish myself somewhere?"

Dunn's face darkened. "What's the matter with some of these rich people here in your city helping you, old man? Charity begins at home, you know," he quoted cunningly.

"Yes, I know; I've written to some of our millionaires who make a practice of endowing insane asylums and eleemosynary institutions whilst cornering wheat and pork and fuel. They all begged to be excused; said they never loaned any money, even to friends."

"The devil! you don't tell me? Why, I should think such men would feel honoured to assist a worthy man when they get a chance. But I'm sorry, Henry; every penny of my own is tied up. So-long; I may see you again."

Holden went home. "Julia, do you think your

father would loan me a thousand dollars on those two houses of mine in Kingston?"

She paused in her work. "O Henry, I hate to ask him. Must we have it?"

"Yes, I know how you feel. But we can't go on this way much longer. This month I made seven dollars, last month nothing, and the month before I made three. I can never hope to do a reputable business here."

"But where else would you go, Henry?" she asked dubiously.

"Oh, anywhere, it doesn't matter—a small town, perhaps. But of course it will take money, and I have not been able to find a position."

And so, after a little hesitancy and reluctance, Julia agreed to write to her father. "We'll make it a matter of business, dear. I'll tell him to call and talk over the security with you."

Two days afterwards, therefore, in response to his daughter's request, Mr. James Dana, pompous and portly and proud, with his overcoat buttoned close and his glossy silk hat in his hand, called to discuss the loan.

"Won't you take off your coat, papa?" said Julia. He had refused to kiss her.

He glanced over the top of her head and blew out his cheeks. "No, I'll only stay a moment. You wanted to see me, you wrote." The physician he ignored altogether.

"No, papa," Julia began timidly, "but——"

"Please take this chair, Mr. Dana," said the doctor, politely, placing a rocker squarely in front of him. "It was I who wanted to speak with you."

Mr. Dana gasped, glanced down, recovered himself and stepped back.

"I'll sit here," said he, taking a straight-back,

wood-bottomed chair. "I've only a moment to lose. Please state what you wanted."

Julia signalled her husband to say nothing, but he refused to heed her.

"I have some property in Kingston, Mr. Dana, that I wish to borrow some money on."

"Indeed, where is it?" He didn't suppose the rascal had a penny.

Henry described the locality. "Two houses, Mr. Dana," naming their numbers.

Mr. Dana reflected quickly. Yes, this was business pure and simple. "Humph! how much did you want?" he asked.

Henry named the amount.

"Nonsense, impossible! Why, they are not worth over five hundred apiece, and vacant at that."

The doctor had purchased them of Mr. Dana's company. "I paid twenty-five hundred," he said, clearing his throat.

Mr. Dana started. "That was before the strike," he admitted grimly. "Since then the houses have stood empty. Naturally, they have depreciated. Surely, you know that was not *our* fault!"

The young scoundrel! He'd teach him to question his father-in-law's honourable methods.

"But you wouldn't refuse to make the loan, Mr. Dana?"

"Of course—at any rate for that amount."

"Ah, but you might loan something? How much would be fair, if you please?"

Mr. Dana reflected. He didn't want to loan a penny, but business was insistent. "Well, two hundred dollars; two hundred and a quarter, maybe."

Henry rose. "That would be of no service—no service whatever." He walked the floor. "I have no money, no practice, and must be able to go somewhere else and——"

"Sir! I did not come here to hear this," Mr. Dana rose too. "I have suffered quite enough at your hands. You——"

"O papa——" cried Julia, running towards him. He waved her aside.

"Silence! I say you robbed me of my daughter, you induced my men to strike, and now try to badger me into loaning a thousand dollars on property that would barely sell for that, and when you can't get it you beg of me. Well, it is useless. I do not feel called upon to give you any money."

Henry's face flushed and grew pale again in a second. "No," he answered slowly, bitterly, "I do not suppose you do. Money is your God; you obtain it, as everyone knows, by running a gigantic sweatshop, defying the Government and all creation, by robbing every labourer in your employ of hundreds in order that you may have millions—well—keep it! keep it! And may it curse you on earth and in hell!"

Julia caught his arm. "O Henry! don't! Do take it back—you don't mean it! O papa——" She was crying.

Her father had started for the door, turned, and glanced back at her. "Julia," said he, "it's no more than I expected when you ran off with him. You can't expect that kind of a man to be a gentleman." He passed out, heavily.

"O Henry—Henry!" she sobbed. "Why did you say that—how could you? But—but you—didn't mean it. No, dear; no! Oh, do go and tell—go after him! He will never forgive us—never!"

She was kneeling before him—hands clasped at his knee. Strangely, scarce conscious of his act, he freed himself, laid her worn little hands on the arm of the chair by his side; she buried her head, and he stood there a moment—at bay! All the

world was against him, condemned him—his wife, with the rest. How strange he felt! the world was slipping under his feet. Silently, dizzily, he stole out into the hall, felt his way to his office, and the next moment a shot rang out; Julia screamed, and fell to the floor.

Meanwhile Mr. Dana had gone on, setting himself a brisk pace of several blocks until he broke out into perspiration and his fever had chance to cool. Then he walked slower; being of a full-blooded, irascible, emphysematous habit, he puffed, and blew out his cheeks. It was very reckless in him to walk so fast, he bethought himself; he was past middle age and could feel that it affected his heart. It thumped! thumped! thumped! and his ears buzzed queerly. Wh—what if he should die? He had heard of such things—there was nothing improbable in fearing it. And again he reduced his pace. At last he was in the business center of Wildwood, standing in front of the local bank whilst waiting for his car. He glanced in through the plate glass; it was nearing closing-time, and the teller had his gold stacked up convenient for counting and locking up for the night. Mr. Dana looked at him, and sighed. What a fool he had been to get so excited over a little money—aye, worse than a fool! He stepped inside, asked if they knew his signature, and receiving a smiling affirmative he drew his check for four figures and came out with his pocket bulging over the breast.

Ah me! How infinitely better men are than the business they represent!

He repaced his way; his heart thumped louder than ever. He tried to walk slower, but couldn't. I'll show them, said he, a smile tugging at the corners of his mouth, that I can be generous—that I am older than they are, and know more. Why,

they are only children! But they shouldn't have mentioned business—it always excites me, makes me shut my teeth tight. Yes, business is ruthless, ruthless; but we have to be so—we must draw the girth tight or the saddle will slip. His pace quickened; and his heart—would it never stop thumping?

At last he reached the street where Julia lived, turned the corner at a generous clip, his hand on the fence-post, and came on with a laugh. It was good to see him. Midway up the block a number of carriages were waiting and circling, and at their door a group of people stood talking. His face changed; he broke into a run. "My God! what is it?" he cried, shouldering his way in at the door.

From the hall he glanced in at the office. His heart stood still, and his knees trembled. Thence he groped his way on into the room where he had spoken with that—that man, less than an hour ago.

The door opened. "Julia, O Julia," he cried, going towards her.

She had been sitting on the sofa, some woman supporting her; at sight of him she screamed and lost consciousness.

He never knew how he got to the door. Some one must have led him out. The open air revived him and he found his way to a carriage. Completely dazed, he rolled on to his home. When he alighted at his curb he threw open his coat, thrusting the package that lay like an icy hand over his heart into the hands of the astonished driver.

"Keep it! Keep it!" he screamed, then cowered at the words as an echo that haunted from hell. That package he would not have touched again for the sum of his fortune.

Again, a few days later, he called on his daughter, but was refused admittance. She was quite ill.

Then later he wrote her: "Come home, come home!"

And the answer caught him tottering; sent his soul a-shuddering outwards into the vastness that lay around him, that engulfed him as a grain of sand upon the rising tide of humanity which he had been so blind, so foolish, as to try to beat back with the palm of his hand. He was drowning in it, drowning; there was none to hear his voice nor see his struggles save the myriad gods and imps who danced before his eyes and laughed at him. "A speck on a pin-head," they called him; an atom so tiny in the plan of all creation that he lost consciousness in trying to see himself as utterly small as he really was. And at night they crept into his room, searched his pockets, took his gold coin, and sat cross-legged there on his pillow playing a monotonous tune in his ears: "Clink! clink! clink! O speck on a pin-head, clink!" And when he opened his eyes in the first dim light of the day there was Julia's letter always before him—always:

"Never speak nor write to me again. Let me try to forget that I ever had a father who was my husband's murderer!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE BOND OF NEMESIS.

"James," said Mrs. Dana, as her husband sat down to breakfast one morning, after one of those battle-fought nights revealed unwillingly to all the world, even to her, by those indelible dreams which he vainly sought to efface—"James, have you noticed any account of this bank failure?"

She seemed very serious. Glancing up at her

quickly, he perceived that she was reading that treacherous newspaper which only the day before he had ordered stopped; it had changed owners recently without his knowledge, and directly had begun talking about him and his affairs with discourtesy, libelling him outrageously merely because he had always insisted on running his own business in a manner to suit himself. Clearly it had become the craze to attack him; among all he knew there was none now save his wife who stood by him; she alone remained true, heedless how others maligned him. And his heart had gone out to her for it, become strangely softened at sight of it even though at times she reminded him painfully of Julia. Aye, she was just Julia's age when he married her; and again he saw her, for an instant, sitting opposite to him at breakfast as on that morning after their wedding. How proud he had been of her! He still recalled how society had welcomed her, patting him on the back the while—even though he was the son of his father—and exclaiming: "Ah, lucky fellow!" And she was rich, too; Mary Marsden was of an eastern family that had been honourably rich for two generations. It was her money that had laid the foundation of his own present fortune. Still gazing at her, he wondered why it was that in all this time she really had changed so little; yes, she had been always the same, bearing with him; generous, loving and loyal—a period covering more than thirty years; thirty years—since he had married and forgotten her. Ah, perhaps he himself had changed—a little, though he trusted not, vaguely.

"No," he replied uneasily. "I have not seen it. Anyway, you can't rely on that paper, Mary. I shouldn't read it." He sipped his coffee, uncomfortably.

She dropped the paper wearily, and leaned back. "What is it?" he asked. "Aren't you well? Are you losing your appetite?" He had feared, though she gave no sign of it, that Julia's misfortunes might weigh more heavily on her than she had ever confessed. "I wish you would consent to see some one, Mary," he persisted; "some doctor who really understands you."

She shook her head, sadly. "No, James, there is no one—who understands—so well as myself."

He started visibly, was on the point of asking her squarely what on earth she pretended to mean. But recovered himself, thought better of it, and answered playfully with affected relief—

"Why, then, so much the better. We shall know exactly what to do, and save our money whilst doing it. So then, what is it, Doctor Mary?"

"No, I don't care for the money—to save it, you know that, James," she began, with strange irrelevancy, he thought. "But I do know the remedy. And if I could only make you see it, believe in it, so that you would not mind the cost, either—nay, even be glad of it—then, I think we should be sure of the cure. Oh yes, I know we should, dear."

He moved restlessly in his chair. "If you would be more explicit," he said, subjoining with manifest irritation, "Pray, state what you mean, Mary. Cure for what?"

"For the wrong," she moaned quickly, impulsively; "and oh! for the ache, and the weariness. For the starved faces that look up at us, everywhere, when we pass; that follow us into our homes and sit down with us, looking at us still, now, whilst we eat." She caught her breath, and went on. "Why, didn't you hear those two men only last night when I drove out to the works for you? They were standing close by the carriage when you

stepped in. The window was down at my side, and I heard one of them say: 'See! that is James Dana. Wouldn't you like a slice of what he's got?' And the other one answered, so bitterly that I hear his words yet: 'No, thank you; it's blood money, blood money! His very carriage is red with it. I should choke eating food at his table, even with blood to wash it down!' Then he laughed. Oh, James, it is frightful! frightful!"

"Faugh!" Her husband waved his hand, madly, as if brushing aside the too insistent insect buzzing before him. "No, I didn't hear them. It would have made no difference anyway. Are we to notice the envious slurs of every lazy good-for-nothing fool in this town? Nonsense! You are simply upset a little, Mary. We shall go away for a time, then you will come back and laugh at it. Surely you give enough to charity, don't you? What more can they want, these tramps! You know very well there must always be poor people and rich people."

The French clock on the mantel ticked musically, monotonously, back and forth, back and forth, "Rich people and poor people," it repeated; and again, and again: "Rich, poor; rich, poor." It had always ticked so.

His wife made no reply. It annoyed him. Everything seemed to mock him, somehow, even the ticking of the clock. Why couldn't she speak to him! Anything was preferable to this uncomfortable silence between them—between them! when deep in his heart he knew it had long been either silence or lies between him and the rest of the world. "What did you mean, Mary," he stammered, "by saying, you know, that you knew a remedy for this nonsense in case I didn't care for the money. For you know I don't care—particu-

larly; that is, it is yours as much as mine; and Julia's, too, with the child she expects—if ever she comes to her senses! Tell me, what did you mean?"

Gliding quickly round the table, she leaned over his shoulder girlishly, and kissed him, knelt on a hassock by his side. "Do you mean it?" she cried. "Oh, James, are you really in earnest?"

Her eagerness pleased him. How much she was to him, after all! His curiosity was aflame again. "How do I know," he asked, "till I hear what you want?"

She smiled; the light shone in her eyes. That was the way he used to speak at such moments—moments when he had never refused her. "No, it is not a new coach, pair of horses, necklace or carpets. Don't be foolish—you know that is all past. Neither is it a new bed in some hospital, gift to a church, an orphanage, or some school."

"Go on," he said, his brows knitting as she paused.

"Well, it is this. Don't say you can't do it, for you can—you should! I want you to give every workman out at Wheeling who has been there three years——"

"Yes?" he challenged her nervously.

"His own home," she demanded. "If you haven't enough to go round, then build more. It won't cost very much. I have money, you know—you may use it all. Then pay them enough to live and save something."

For answer he pushed his chair aside, rising abruptly, and beginning to pace the floor. "Yes, I might have known," he coughed, as though repeating the answer already revolved in his mind. "It is that fellow again, that Dr. Holden! He made Julia believe in his theories—and now she repeats them to you. Well, I tell you he was crazy, crazy!

I always thought so, and his going the way he did proves it. Yet his theories, you see, still live to prick and annoy me long after he is dead! You know it, Mary. You should have known better than to take any stock in such nonsense! You know it is offensive—to any man of intelligence. I tell you that kind of a man should be hanged off-hand. His theories will upset every institution in this country if they ever gain ground.”

Her face again took on the wearied expression as at first. Glancing up at the angry man who glared down at her, she asked quietly: “Are our institutions so perfect then, James, that it would be unholy to upset them, as you say?”

“Faugh! There you go again, Mary! Holy or not, our institutions are not founded on theory, but fact—as men have chosen to make them. And I say it is unwise and impossible to change things!” He moved away, stood looking out of the window a moment where the sparrows twittered and the sun shone without warmth upon the bare frozen earth. He saw nothing, however.

“Listen, James!” she protested gently. “You have misunderstood me. I know nothing whatever of these theories you dislike. Julia has never said a word to me, and as for her husband, poor fellow! we shall gain nothing by blaming him further. But I do know this, James: those men down at Wheeling have never been paid as they should be. Why, look at them; they are all paupers still, living from hand to mouth, whilst we and others, who have worked little if at all, have grown rich. Do you think this is right? Or even if it is right, within the law, would you have the heart, meeting a poor man on the street, to hold him up day after day and take away nearly all of his earnings simply because you are the stronger?”

Mr. Dana turned round. "How long has it been, Mary," he asked hardly, "since the Marsdens began to give back a portion of their plunder?"

"The Marsdens!" she cried in astonishment. "What do you mean, James? You know very well that the Marsdens made their money honestly, in banking, never plundered a soul; never engaged in any of these lawless corporations that nowadays move heaven and earth to get rich. No, I don't blame anyone—don't misunderstand me; but my people made their money at a time when such schemes would have been considered dishonourable. When a man would rather have died than rob the poor, take advantage of the helpless. Oh, James, let us stop it, let us give it all up, keeping only the little I had. It is enough; the rest—is blood money."

Ignoring her appeal, he replied, with less passion: "Yes, I see, but this only goes to prove your ignorance of the whole question. I am sorry to—to make you feel that your people's money is no more honourable, as you call it, than our own; but it is only common fairness to me, to ourselves, to speak plainly. Mary, did you never realise that banking, honourable banking, is about the most heartless and hypocritical business in all this Christian world? Why, you accuse us nowadays of taking advantage of the helpless and unfortunate. Did you never think a moment that this very class is always the banker's victim? Since time began, the helpless and unfortunate have been the legitimate prey of the banker. How, then, am I any different from your people, who made their money on mortgage, interest, and foreclosure—by the loaning of money? A business that Christ himself condemned—oh yes, everybody knows that; and that the church has never sanctioned save as it had to."

Silence. The clock ticked on, approvingly at present; seemed now to lend him strength. "Why," she asked finally, "did you never tell me this? I have told you that I know nothing of such things. Why should you mock me with my helplessness now?"

"No—my God! I did not mean to mock you, Mary; look up! I beg your pardon a thousand times. But you forced me to—to defend myself. These are things, of course, that men do not speak of. People think we do not know; but it's a mistake, we do know; but we are powerless to help ourselves; must all do the best we can. Well, I have simply taken advantage of my opportunities, Mary, at Wheeling as elsewhere. The same as your own people did in the past, as everyone does to-day—and will go on doing."

She arose, stood beside him. A moment he held both her hands in his unresistingly, till again her eyes fell on the paper she had been reading. "Go on doing," she echoed tremulously, his last words sweeping her on as a leaf in the storm—"go on doing, even when it means murder?"

"Mary!"

His voice rang out, pierced her with its quick vibrations implying challenge and entreaty, as he dropped her hands. Was she to accuse him of that fellow's death, heap it upon him even as the rest of the world? Her face paled; but no, she shook her head; as if divining his thought, she answered—

"No, James, not that, but listen! You remember—I asked you when you entered if you had heard of this bank's failure."

"Yes, and I said no. However, I presume it is the Chicaqua National. It is no news to me—I expected it yesterday."

"And the president—did you expect that, too? He has committed suicide."

He staggered. "Impossible!" and then, rallying quickly: "Why, he would never be guilty of such a foolish thing! Let me see it!"

She handed him the paper. He read the headlines, and sat down heavily in his chair, his arms on the table.

"I shan't ask you, James, if it is true," she said slowly, pitifully. "Perhaps it is nothing, anyway, save what we have always done in the past, as everyone does to-day—and will go on doing. You see the paper says that bank held a majority of the stock of a certain street-car company, which was a rival to another company of which you are president. That in order to break up the rival company and acquire its stock below par, a scheme was entered into to wreck this bank. The plans were successful; and the president, ruined, drowns himself in the lake. Is it not plain enough, James, even to us; and if to us, how much more so to the people at large? How must they regard us—with all this blood—this blood—mon——"

"Stop!" raising his hand passionately. "I sha'n't hear it. Not another word, Mary—not a word! I tell you you can't understand these things as a man. I've told you already that business has nothing to do with theory. Well, then, let that be enough!"

"But has it nothing to do with honour, either? No, no! you will promise to do what I asked, won't you, James?" she persisted undauntedly. "I mean about those houses, and paying more wages."

"Why, no! No; I can promise no such thing. I don't own the works, do I? Besides we shall have all we can do to pay our dividends as it is. If we should increase wages it would ruin us. I wish you

wouldn't concern yourself with what you can't understand!"

"But I *must* understand it," she cried, her voice rising. "It is my duty. If this money ruins innocent families, makes widows, and works desolation among my own friends and neighbours, if it is truly blood money, as people say——"

"Mary, don't repeat that word again!"

"Very well; but answer me this, please," she went on, with decision. "If the Wheeling works made enough money last year to pay dividends amounting to forty per cent, why can't they increase wages?"

"Because," he cried, stung by her pertinacity into declaring the actual state of affairs, thoughtless of consequences—"because we have issued more stock; two shares for one—do you hear? Well, this has been sold, most of it, to new purchasers—to widows and orphans, some of it; and in good faith we are in duty bound to pay a fair rate of interest—must do so to keep up our standing. Can you understand that? The same reason, you see, that the Marsdens encountered whenever they loaned money. It wasn't right for them to foreclose farm mortgages, was it, just because people couldn't keep up the interest? How did they know whether crops would be good or bad? God alone could know that!"

"Two shares for one," she gasped with wide eyes, paying no heed to his taunt. "Is that what you said?"

"Yes, yes, of course. It's the way—the world over."

"And you must pay dividends on this—this second stock, the same as the first?"

He made no answer, had acknowledged that already. The Wheeling company could not afford

to anticipate or speculate on dull times any more than the Marsdens, her people, had ever considered drought and the failure of crops. Great financiers always left that part of the problem to God. He wished she would understand that!

She moved away, stood thinking a moment with clasped hands, her back towards him; turning finally, and resting a hand on his shoulder, she said: "Listen, why should we seek to deceive ourselves in this matter? Surely it requires no intelligence to understand what that means—that second issuing of stock. Why, James, it's a swindle!"

He started violently, shook her hand aside roughly; was on the point of making a sharp rejoinder, but she kept right on, gave him no time. "No, no, let us at least be honest here, between ourselves. There can be nothing secret in this—all the world knows it; all the world must know that if anything happens now, if dull times come or prices fall, that the Wheeling company will be unable to pay dividends on all that stock without reducing wages and starving their workmen. All the world," despairingly, "can see that we have given hostages to the devil—signed a bond with Nemesis; why, then, should we be blind to it ourselves? Wait!" she went on rapidly, her voice gathering force with the pent intensity of long repression, the hurrying flood adown the gulf that had been growing between them, widening silently when he thought they were nearest, without his perception till now—till now, when she stood on the ledge opposite and called out to him, her voice sounding far and strange, without passion, without respect, almost he thought without love—"Wait! you know I have tried to stop you before, but you would never listen. I could never make it seem real, somehow, this doubling of all our money every year

whilst the workmen complained, starved, went out on strike. Well, I can stand it no longer, James; it is killing me. How am I to look that banker's wife in the face, and her fatherless children? You know they are intimate friends—attend the same church. And Julia—if what I say means nothing to you, now, after all these years, I shall go to her. She needs me, perhaps——”

“Mary!” At last he had cried out, in sheer astoundment, though too unnerved to add a syllable more in protest.

Yet again, at the sound of her name, she had come back to him, knelt by his side. “Ah, then you *will* promise me, James?” she pleaded passionately. “You will have nothing more to do with such wicked schemes; will give up everything—for my sake?”

The softening of her tone, and her manner, swept aside the barriers, the hallucinations, that had risen, and an instant he glanced at her, wildly, yet gratefully. How foolish he had been! He had fallen asleep and been dreaming. See! Was she not speaking to him as a wife should speak to her husband? Still, some insistent question still trembled on her lips; ah, he remembered it now—had even heard it before. And with an effort he rallied.

“Give it up! What—what up?” he asked, rising slowly and standing unsteadily as he touched a bell-button. The butler entered. “Order the carriage at once,” he commanded; and the man bowed and withdrew. “You mean give up all this—this blood you’ve been talking about? Why, Mary, I tell you it’s all foolishness. I don’t see any—any blood.” He affected to smile at her. “I must be off to the office.”

"What! You will drive—through the streets—to-day?"

"Yes, madam," he cried irascibly, "I shall! I shall! No one will mob me, I suppose."

But he would take chances no further; feeling his way out of the room, blindly, and into the hall, he drew on his overshoes, and was adjusting his muffler when his wife followed, took his overcoat off the rack and held it for him. Neither spoke for a moment, and when at last she addressed him her tones seemed fraught merely with dull resignation.

"You know that you are already carrying too much on your shoulders, James——"

"Oh no, nonsense! It is nothing but play to me."

"But you don't sleep, get the rest that you——"

"Who—I?" He drew out his handkerchief, mopped his forehead. "No, of course I don't sleep as I used to—no man does. One hasn't time. But I didn't suppose you knew that, Mary."

"Yes," she replied, but without looking at him, "I hear you, sometimes, speaking out in the night."

"In the night! No, no," he protested quickly; "it's a mistake. I never speak out like that! Have I turned foolish? No; you dream it, Mary; it's the boys on the street." He felt his hands growing moist, passed his handkerchief from one palm to the other. Why did she go on worrying herself over him, inevitably reminding him of what no one could help—not now. "Mary, you only annoy me by this—by this——"

He got no further. Her every expression foretold her answer, cut him short. Her first words, as he dropped into a chair, he scarcely heard at all save as a confused murmur, ringing a thousand

tinkling echoes afar off, then anon sounding nearer and nearer, breaking into a roar. Again the flood was between them; he saw her dimly through the reddening mist, hearing her voice at intervals. "It is useless to urge! I have kept on hoping day after day that you would finally confess the evil—for it must be evil, this thing that devours the innocent in its pitiless toils whilst men plot." A pause, and she continued. "No, it is not as though we had to do these things; we could stop, if we chose"—her words lingering after, repeating themselves, enveloping him, yet withal was he powerless to interpret them, to make protest till the moment had passed. At the words, "I had hoped before this that you would do something, James, that would make it possible for Julia to come back to us, her heart changed towards you," he had intended to reply; had in fact opened his mouth but couldn't speak; could only sit and stare at her stupidly, impotently, though he had really meant to say something there—to say something; and the failure to do so kept echoing foolishly in his brain. Inso-much that her final words as she half turned away, one foot on the stairs, found him spent and panting, plagued still with that clinging palsy of dream-life, that one thing which he could not crush; creeping serpent-like out of himself whilst his real self slept.

"It would simply be sanctioning what my heart loathes," her swift glance stripping the rooms bare as she looked back,—“my staying here in the midst of all this—purchased at the price of guilt. No, I shall not be very far, at any time. You have but to come to me—when you need me. I shall only take what I brought you, and try to use it, with Julia's help, to wipe out some of the stain of this—this increase.”

She passed on up the stairs, leaving him staring

confusedly after her, making no move, speaking no word. Try as he would he could not call her back to him; her very name, it seemed, in his madness to speak it, held his lips tightly sealed. Fool! Why had he not spoken whilst yet God permitted him? For what was all this—this increase, as she named it, compared to her, to his family? No, no! she misjudged him extravagantly; he was not as she thought him; was never in fact either more or less than other men in the midst of this world. Why should she blame him so pitilessly, then, for exercising only his common rights—under the law! Who save women and children, and the wickedly envious, looking on the ultimate star of his success, should see it turning red in the heavens—come to speak of it so? He could not tell it would lead to murder, could he? And with her vanishing footsteps the silence stole over him; already his home was under its pall—as in the night. And again his hallucinations trooped forth, those scarlet revellers of sound and perception, disturbed only for a moment by the crunching wheels of his carriage driving round to the door. The sunlight slanted through the coloured glass in the hall, and the carpet at his feet became suddenly crimsoned. He attempted to move his feet out of it; was growing moist all over. The swollen veins stood out on his chubby white hands where tiny beads of water that had sparkled at first with his diamonds now changed in a flash to red—blood red.

“Mr. Dana,” he heard the butler call out, as he entered the room and stood bowing blandly before him—“Mr. Dana, your carriage is bloody.”

He started forward, fell rather than stood on his feet. “It’s a lie, you scoundrel!” he cried, with supreme effort. “It’s a lie!”

The servant gasped; his master swayed and fell at his feet.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE GODS SEND WAR.

"Professor Moore," said the managing-editor of the *Republican*, as Kenneth entered the sanctum early one afternoon, "I presume you have observed this constantly growing and widespread belief on the part of the general public, that it is becoming more and more impossible for any man to succeed or live at all in this world, and be honest—in accordance with the precepts of Christ?"

Kenneth sighed and sat down. "Yes, sir; I have been aware of—of that impression," he conceded.

The editor smiled. "Ah, I thought so," picking up a manuscript from his desk. "For this reason I wish you would reply to this fellow. You will catch his argument at once, of course; to wit, that our economic institutions of to-day are all founded on force and fraud, that profit and interest are simply legalised robbery, hence it is impossible for any man to be honest. Now I wish you would try and utterly smash that idea. Tell him, you know, that the world would be very well as it is if people would only change their hearts. That is what preachers say, I believe. Well, a newspaper doesn't need to go beyond the church in its efforts to guide and instruct the public. Do you understand?"

Kenneth did not reply at once. Indeed he had entered the office feeling thoroughly out of sorts with himself and his work; with the old, despairing habit of truth-telling strong upon him. In such a mood he felt it quite beyond his power to lie suc-

cessfully, upon the gad, so as properly to impress the general public. "I beg your pardon," he answered slowly, "but I can scarcely reply to that argument. You know, and I know, that the public can't change their hearts, can't be honest, even if they wish—unless they choose to starve." And then, recklessly: "Why, look at me! Am I honest? Could I continue to get a living here if I ceased to lie, or changed my heart? I can't change my heart till the whole world changes its heart!"

The editor shook his head, patiently. "My dear fellow, I wish you wouldn't speak of that. You know it is useless for us to rebel. You have yourself to support, and I my family. I am speaking to you simply as the editor of this newspaper. Neither your feelings nor my own have anything to do with the question."

Kenneth rose, and again he begged his pardon. "Yes, I know, and I don't blame you or anyone else. Only I am so sick of it—sick to the very soul! I can't write that sort of stuff any more. Will you accept my resignation?"

The editor gasped; staring at him a moment, he answered: "Of course—if you wish it. But I beg you to do nothing hastily. You are not feeling well, perhaps. I advise you to take a day off. Go out and look around, and if you find such a thing as an honest man anywhere, a man who is neither being robbed nor robbing others, come back and tell me about him. Then it will be time enough for us to talk about being honest ourselves. Prosperity hasn't agreed with you, evidently. You have forgotten how you felt that day you called here and wanted work, last November."

"No, no, I haven't forgotten it," Kenneth protested quickly. "In fact I shall never forget it, nor your kindness and forbearance. But I simply

cannot go on with this—this daily sacrifice of conscience.”

In the half-year of their acquaintance their friendship and understanding had become mutual; hence it was that, knowing himself to be strictly within the limits of that friendship, the editor exclaimed, in good-natured contempt—

“Conscience! My dear fellow, you know very well that conscience has no rating in Bradstreet’s. Have you no other resource? If not I shall refuse to accept your resignation.”

Kenneth smiled. Yes, he had something perhaps besides his conscience that he could fall back on. He had managed to save up one hundred dollars; then there was his novel, on which he had been at work all winter. It would be ready in a couple of weeks. That would probably tide him over for awhile.

“You never told me what subject you were writing on. I hope, for your sake, that it doesn’t deal with what you sociologists call ‘the economic tragedy.’ People won’t read it, you know.”

He explained. Yes, the book did turn on economics, being a tale of Caius Gracchus and the attempt to revive the Licinian land laws some twenty-one hundred years ago. When he had closed the editor said: “Well, I honestly trust it may make a hit. Still, the rich will shy at it, you know—at that division of the land, even if it all happened over two thousand years ago. They will say it is suggestive. I hope you added something obscene, a Roman banquet or religious orgie, just to make it interesting to our leisure class. However, bring me a copy when it is out, and I promise to see that our book-reviewer doesn’t damn it more than is absolutely necessary to protect the *Republican’s* policy.”

Thus he had brought his newspaper career to a

close; a step which he had contemplated since Holden's death some two months ago, and especially after Julia's return home. No longer did there seem the faintest necessity for his continuing to mislead and deceive the general public, and all for a paltry thirty dollars a week. The stimulus that had impelled him at first urged him no more. Indeed, save for the solicitations of his friends, he would have thrown up his position in the first despairing shock and grief that well-nigh overwhelmed him at the passionate passing of his friend. Why had not Holden spoken to *him*, instead of to that miserly, old thief, his father-in-law? Afterwards, though, he had heard the story of James Dana's going to the bank and drawing out a thousand dollars—and giving it to the hackman who had driven him home! And in the bitter loneliness of his heart he had laughed at this wicked comedy of greed and ill-starred benevolence; had written it up, savagely, and in the excitement of the hour had even succeeded in having it published in a newspaper wherein Mr. Dana was the chief stockholder.

But at first mention of his intent to throw up his newspaper work he was met with objections, strenuous and unanswerable, with logic that caused him to stagger. "Why!" he had exclaimed, in righteous indignity at their unreasonable interference, "you don't know what you are counselling. Would you be so utterly reckless of all law and morality as to tell a thief to keep on stealing, or otherwise supplying his wants dishonestly, when he really desires to reform?" Whereunto they had answered severally: "Yes, of course; at least till the thief finds some visible way of honestly supplying those wants. You would advise him so too, professor, were the thief any one else than yourself."

Perforce he acceded, but with the resolve then

and there to find some honest business as quickly as possible, even should it pay but a pittance. And a few evenings thereafter Enid had urged him to try his hand at a story. "It may be the means of escape, you know, from the business-world which you so dislike." The suggestion had been instantly seconded by Nannette, with promise of her assistance. "I am sure you will find it interesting," she had insisted, "and it will take your mind in other directions for a time." But at this he had demurred; refused to consider any plot or tale that had no special significance, declaring that he had neither power nor inclination to write those suave, fluent words of no particular import such as the superficial world without might hail as literature.

At this point Kent had entered, and being appealed to he had at once suggested an historical novel based on the economic rebellion of earlier days. "Why don't you try Caius Gracchus?" he asked. "I believe that period would just suit you. Those people are all buried now, and you are privileged to speak of the wealthy class of that day with all the contempt they deserve. The O. G. Goldsmith-Smith Co. would be glad to publish such a novel, I feel sure."

"You are so fortunate, professor," said Nannette wickedly, "in not being famous. If you were, the O. G. Goldsmith-Smith Publishing Company wouldn't even look at your book, and you would be obliged to go to a better house."

Kenneth glanced at her in surprise. "If I were famous—what do you mean?"

"Oh, I mean it is one of his ridiculous notions," she declared; "you see he considers it hopeless for famous authors ever to learn anything. Now do be honest, Mr. Kent."

"Well then, I do think so," Kent admitted frankly; "inasmuch as so few authors have any modesty——"

"Oh dear! to whom does he refer, professor?"

"Inasmuch as few authors have any adequate conception of modesty," Sam continued, ruthlessly, "their very first success is bound to unfit them for any further usefulness in this world. Why, just glance a moment at the popular young author! The instant he meets with success he ceases to live in a way that might insure his continued good work, but straightway proceeds to buy a brick house, to keep a wife, an angora cat, a cow and a nursery, furniture, horses and servants. Thus encumbered how shall he hope to achieve greatness? When trifles come trooping in at the door in this manner his pristine aspiration burns itself out with the smoke from his family hearth. No longer does he give reflection to that life which he has learned by virtue of long years of struggling and hard knocks, but betakes himself anon to the depiction of titles roués, sentimental heiresses and the thousand and one conventional trivialities that make our fiction a dead weight scarcely to be borne with patience. And all because of this unfortunate success, which makes him eternally forgetful of the more interesting life whence he sprang."

Kenneth sighed. "Perhaps you are right," he conceded, "yet I confess that I should like to experience the phenomenon of a financial success. I believe that I should have modesty enough to withstand its snares."

"Oh, they all believe that," Sam went on. "Why, I have in mind several very promising writers whose names I could mention"—here he looked at Nannette, who flushed furious, and her eyes snapped, whilst he smiled and continued. "They all

thought themselves able to withstand it, but none of them have ever done anything since, because they are for the present completely out of touch with humanity."

"But their books continue to sell," urged Enid, only half convinced.

"Unfortunately they do, but for the same reason that the public continues to pay its hard-earned money to see plays like *East Lynne* and *The Lady of Lyons*. Oh, I confess it seems hopeless to me sometimes, hopeless for any author of real nobility to expect any recognition in the sight of a public that is for the greater part stone blind."

"Oh"—"But"—"You are too sweeping!" Feminine voices vied in condemning. "At least, other books are entertaining."

Sam sighed. "Possibly, possibly. Yet it is exceedingly doubtful whether it should be esteemed more respectable or commendable to take literary opium than that of the common drug stores. All forms of dissipation are entertaining, perhaps."

"I once knew a man," Kenneth reflected, "who drank Pond's extract."

"Goodness! What for?"

Kent roared. "Oh, for entertainment, of course. Some folks have a bad internal sprain that demands liniment, coddling, and light literature."

So Kenneth had plunged into the Roman Republic; gathering his material quickly, and finding to his surprise that with Nannette to suggest, Enid to copy, and Kent to criticise, he could easily do fifteen hundred words a day; insomuch that he now found his work drawing to its closing chapters without abating one jot of that enthusiasm with which he had begun; the entire movement having rushed onward eagerly, headlong, in a manner that amazed and delighted him though he resolutely re-

fused to claim any proprietary rights whatsoever. "Lo!" he had laughed, "the Law of the Division of Labour in literature."

Poverty, however, that begets an excess of heart, of feeling, is fatal to art. And he knew it, but generally found himself helpless to avoid its meshes. For what is heart save hunger, out of the past or the present? And so, in spite of his absorption in his plot, never once could he forget its every economic relations. And over this latter he had had many a wordy war when his manuscript was returned to him, beautifully written, but with whole paragraphs deleted which he vaguely remembered having written with no little labour. The story being written at Enid's home, he had gone there on the morning following his abandonment of newspaper work, intending to complete the final chapters. The house was silent when he entered; and, passing into the library, for three hours he worked rapidly, without interruption. Then pushing back his chair, he rose, and picking up the sheets last copied, began reading them over hastily.

A frown was on his face when Enid entered. "Why, what's the matter?" she asked as he glanced up. "Did I disturb you—aren't you glad to see me?"

"Yes, indeed I am!" he exclaimed, coming towards her. "Look here now, Enid!" and he tapped the manuscript sternly with his free hand, "What have you done with those two whole paragraphs? You know what I mean—concerning that corn-law!"

"Corn-law! Dear me!" she protested, "I didn't see anything about that. Really, Kenneth, you must have dreamt it."

"No, no, you know what I mean! The *Lex Frumentaria*—where is it?"

She smiled ingenuously. "Oh, is that it?" she asked, with evident relief. "You know I read that over two or three times, Kenneth. It was terribly stupid. I thought you must have fallen to writing an editorial for the *Republican* and got it twisted into your manuscript by mistake. I left it out, of course. There was entirely too much of it.

He glowered at her. "Humph! how do you tell when there's too much or not enough?" he asked incredulously. "I'm sure I can't."

"Well, then, just leave it to me," she answered generously. "I can generally tell when I'm bored. Don't you like the way it's copied? You see I've found a new way to write with the fountain-pen. You just turn it with the hollow side up and it writes ever so much prettier—don't you think so?"

It diverted, but did not convince him. "Listen, Enid," he said despairingly, "you have cut out the strongest part. If it failed to interest you it is because of my faulty art, not of the matter itself. The whole history turns on that—on the economics; otherwise all history would be nothing but a mere conglomerate of meaningless incidents. You know how it was with Christianity, how it had its origin because the poor of that day were forced to bind themselves together in small communes in order to exist at all, rather than because a few fanatics hoped to get to heaven thereby. It's the promised Sunday-school picnic and Christmas tree that makes the omnivorous small boy anxious over his soul, and drives him pell-mell into the church. Everywhere the masses are more interested in saving their stomachs than their souls—food is a stronger force than conventional religion."

"But why should you speak of it here—why not let it pass, or leave it to be imagined?"

"Simply because," he answered slowly, "it is

part of the unfortunate destiny of a seer, who must always spend the best years of his life in arguing over truths that should be self-evident, in order that fools may agree and that solidarity and progress may go on the faster. It was so with the Gracchi—has always been so."

He startled and confused her—was bound to sail without a thought of commerce. "I admit the truth, Kenneth," she stammered, "and its strength. But don't you see it would make enemies? Why can you not be reasonable—why forget that the sole purpose of writing this book is to sell it?"

He paused in his strides, then turned and came towards her, seated himself in his chair. She was leaning against his desk.

"Yes, I know," he replied keenly, bitterly, "literature is in the same fix as everything else. No man shall do his best, speak, write, or paint the truth that is in him, lest he frighten away the public. I must immediately make preparations to have my work screamed in the market-place, the while I go stand on the street-corner and hold out my hand: Grant me, O heartless world that hastens, rose-bud maidens, stalwart youths, double-breasted men of business—grant me, I beseech, this merest right to live by buying my book! Contains no ideas and warranted not to kill!"

Her face saddened. "Forgive me," she implored. "Indeed, Kenneth, I never meant to remind you of that; only—I do so want you to succeed! You have suffered so much that you do not realise the force of your every passionate word—in your work or when you speak. I would give all the world to have you forget it all."

Eyes and voice were of the sea. He caught her to him.

"My love! You have given it. I forget only too often!"

And so he wrote on, feverishly, impatiently, appreciating to the full how slight were the bonds that now gave an apparent permanency and shape to his life. True, in the ardour of work he might occasionally forget, might even deceive himself with the idea that he was an integral part of the world, and not a mere interloper, or at best only an onlooker condemned yet tolerated for a space. For what was his work, after all? What substance had it? How could he look his own Roman townsmen in the eye and give the satisfactory pass-word to their constant challenge, sneering and contemptuous, even war-like: "*Cui bono? cui bono?*" Especially when even his dearest friends could not honestly vouch for his success in a field where everything was so uncertain. And to cap it all, the ink was scarcely dry on his final page when the war broke out with Spain. Whereupon Kent advised delaying publication until fall. "I want it to make a hit," said the publisher, "and believe it will. But it would be sheer madness to bring it out now—might even spoil its chances altogether."

"And in the meantime, I suppose," Kenneth had answered laconically, "I shall have to go to war in order to get a living."

Kent laughed. "Good heavens! if I found my right to get an honest living denied me by the organised pirates of society, I should raise such a howl as should move heaven and earth! There is no right nor sense in keeping still, in concealing such matters. They ought to be known by every one, and the man who makes them known ought to have the thanks of every honest man and woman the world over. No man need feel a minute's shame in finding himself out of work in a world where all

natural opportunities are monopolised by a pack of plutocrats who are ruthlessly bent on squeezing us and all posterity out of existence. No, I shouldn't enlist; a country that fails to provide work for all its people in times of peace is a country that is not worth fighting for in times of war! Think of it—a government that hypocritically guarantees to protect its citizens from foreign invasion, yet refuses, what is infinitely more important, to stand between them and starvation! By the way, have you ever tried the labour papers?"

Kenneth shook his head.

"Well, I'd try them. You may strike something. Good-by."

But again he was doomed to disappointment. "Why, Dr. Moore," replied the editor of one of those papers whom he knew slightly, "we should always be more than pleased to publish anything you write, but as for paid contributors, we have none."

From the labour papers he made a tour of the libraries. At one of these the librarian came out of his room and spoke to him—a gracious, kindly gentleman with a growing reputation as a minor poet. There was an unawakened, far-off frenzy glowing in his eyes, and it was plainly with no little effort that he aroused himself sufficiently to appreciate Kenneth's request. Then with a start he replied:

"Dear me! I am very, very sorry, but it would be no use to leave an application, as I have more names now than I can possibly find positions for during the next ten years."

It was growing dark as he started home, yet he concluded to walk and save his car-fare. Thirty-odd blocks of variable length, that he could have traversed in an hour if he had not been set upon

by a pair of footpads and hit over the head. When he regained his senses sufficiently to go on, he made his way to the nearest police-station, where he reported his loss—a gold watch with his mother's picture in the case, and some sixty dollars, perhaps, in loose change and greenbacks. All he had—at any rate. It was annoying; a man's judgment is scarcely to be commended for its dispassionateness after such an adventure; for the first time he conceded that those alleged Christian preachers in the churches of his city might not be so far wrong, after all, when they counselled the cold-blooded shooting down of such highwaymen. He hated to lose his watch, anyway——

Throughout the evening his head ached fearfully; causing him to seek his bed early, and, after counting the chiming hours till midnight, to fall at last into a strange half-sleep peopled with the phantoms of delirium. In shadowy guise they appeared to him, the forms and the myths outgrown amid the semblance of scenes forgotten. Not an act of his life but came trooping forth, each with its appropriate actor as if long trained to the rôle. For an instant they halted before him, a motley company, habited all alike in black, silhouetted clearly against the scarlet curtain of his fancy. Then a bell chimed faintly, once—and they began passing before him. The drama had begun—that drama of one's life which men in general are so loth to attend. And alas! 'tis but a poor play at best. All men would confess it; all would declare that the veriest tyro in play-writing, given *carte blanche*, could produce something infinitely more sane, more virile, more amusing, than this miserable fizzle of their own fruitless lives. O God, a poor thing in good sooth! Though perchance it might all have been different, quite different, had each been free—free to act at

all times the rôle he knew to be right. From boyhood to youth and on into ripening manhood, how without order and method it all seemed!

Then remoter events gave place to the present as the dreamer turned and tossed in his sleep. At first he had lain very quietly, content merely to look on, feeling a moment's vague impersonal interest, compassion, disapproval, or even cynical amusement, over the situations and struggles of the luckless puppets. For anyone could see how the performance must terminate; the most untutored theatre-goer could have foretold disaster from the moment that a faint gray line began to appear in the background, to acquire shape and substance, becoming at last a stone-wall that towered constantly higher and higher as the play continued and the puppets approached, and that now frowned and cast its shadow over the entire stage. Beyond was a land where the sun shone, where even puppets might be happy, might become worthy the name of men and women, it was agreed—even by the most practical and conservative! Folly, though, to attempt to tear down the structure stone by stone! Its invisible heights had never been scaled, and as for passing round it, impossible!—it encircled the earth. Whence the puppets all turned back—all save one; save one, who, with hands tied behind him, fell straightway to beating his head against the wall. Whereat the others laughed in derision, asked if he was going straight through it, and lo! all the theatre roared in response. It was very comical; one could hear his skull as it struck the naked stones, time and again, time and again. Then the laughter died away. "Good God! would the fool never cease?"

Kenneth sat bolt upright in bed, clasping his head between his hands. The room spun round

him as he stood on his feet and felt his way to the bureau where he lit the gas, turning it on full and bright. At the foot of his bed hung a heavy German schlafrock which he drew on, slipping his feet into a pair of felt pantofles as he sank into a chair. By this the phantasmagoria had passed, all save the final image, with its knocking headache. After sitting a moment he again rose, and turning to a shelf he picked up a small glass-stoppered phial half-full of white crystals. This perhaps would ease that infernal throbbing—if he should take enough. He had sometimes taken it before, for sleeplessness; and filling a glass one-third full of water he added the crystals slowly. "*To cease upon the midnight with no pain.*" Never, perhaps, had the words startled and appealed to him in that way. But he dissolved no more than the usual dose; and drinking it off, sat down to await its relief. And whilst he waited, wearily, his arms resting on the table that was littered with writing material, he drew a tablet towards him and began to write; with visible effort at first, and then at the close more naturally—

"You know how it is, dear; I should never be satisfied as things are, never contented now till every man has the merest right to do right. And this I have been taught the folly of expecting—at least in my day. There is such a thing, perhaps, as a man's being made drunk with the omniscient wine of Democracy. Well, such a person is very unpleasant company, continually getting his friends into trouble. I should only go on sailing your ship out into the storm, though it were wrecked a thousand times. Do you know, Enid, I have always blamed you a little for that—the devil was in the storm that day! No, not for that; yet if you had made me stay with you under the trees,

content to play with your big wax dolly, I feel sure it might all have been quite different, somehow.

“By the way, a couple of business-men picked my pocket last night. I don't care for the money—certainly not as much as they; but they kept my watch. If you can I wish you would get it, and keep it. My mother's picture was in the back. Of course it would be no use to advertise, but if you ever run across old Spanish Pete ask him to find it for you. Poor old chap! I happen to know that he handles that sort of merchandise. And so, Enid—good-by.”

At ten o'clock the following morning Kenneth stood in line at a recruiting station, and at noon he started south with his regiment.

EPILOGUE

An ass, a dog, and a man.

"Get up, Solomon!"

The man slapped the ass; the dog barked gladly, frisked about his master a moment, then set off on a mad chase after a rabbit in the chapparal, and the ass started forward.

Shouldering their way upward from the fertile green valley that fairly revelled below in its luxurious largesses, this trio had come to a pause for mid-day refreshment in the shade of a group of live oaks where the foothills fringed the mesa. It was mid-January, the hillsides everywhere blossomed with violets and forget-me-nots in their beds of green; and making a pied parterre of the mesa-land stood patches of golden poppies with sun-worshipping faces uplifted to the father of all, aflame in the infinite azure. Backward rose the spires of an infant city sweltering in the broad stare of noon; and beyond, in seductive majesty, mistress and queen of the freshening breeze and its kisses of orient sweetness, swept the Pacific ocean, sparkling and radiant.

The man removed his sombrero, and the breeze, as he faced it a moment, tumbled the dark hair over his forehead, fetching a smile of sheer seduction. Then again, "Get up, Solomon!" he urged, turning and half pushing the obstinate little beast through an abrupt descent between the hills and down a rugged pathway towards a cañon that opened and gradually unfolded before them into a broad beau-

tiful valley. A glade winding ever upward through the heart of the perennial oaks, alternating with level and velvety swards where the grotesque sycamores coiled and sported in strange antediluvian shapes suggestive of predatory life, that caused the conservative Solomon to pause ever and anon and wink a distrustful ear in their forbidding direction.

"No, it's all right, old fellow," his master assured him; "there's nothing up here to be leery over more dangerous than trees, or birds, or rabbits. By the universal Pan!" And again he paused for a moment, stood peering up through the tall trees and afar to the eastward where ran the amethyst battlements whose peaks were capped with the eternal snows. Near by the wild canary called from its nest in the eglantine, whilst that mournful stealer of notes the sweetest and saddest, the mocking-bird, listened and echoed at intervals, impatiently waiting for night when he should have the star-lit stage to himself. No note save nature's anywhere, save for the far-off tinkling of bells that floated over the glade from a thousand grassy hills where the flocks were feeding.

Drawing a letter from his pocket, the man stood there an instant reading the close, smiling softly the while—

"It is all too horrible; I feel that the city is crushing the life out of me. Enid has determined to go abroad, but I—I am going home, to my father's. Someday, perhaps, you will come to see me; I hope so. But you know my people have moved to California—they live fifteen miles from the nearest station. Think of that! Good-by—Nannette. P. S.—Don't forget to send me the *Sun* regularly."

Sam chuckled. Fifteen miles from the nearest station—what a conceit, when he had come more

than two thousand already! "Go on, Solomon!" And again the caravan resumed its journey. It was during the summer whilst he was away on his vacation that the letter had come to him, and when he returned to the city the writer was gone. Whereupon he wrote her that very same night and with no little labour and painstaking; had in fact seldom been so critical in revising a manuscript—and it wasn't right even then! The following morning he burned it, resolved not to risk all on a thing so inadequate as a letter. And now—well, he was surely within five miles of it, at any rate! The day before he had left the overland train at a grass-grown country side-track; finding no available transportation he had spent the night with a neighbouring rancher, and early in the morning, having obtained the loan of a burro and quickly making a pack of those encumbrances of an effete civilisation fetched with him, he had set forth, with the rancher's dog to guide him.

It was late in the afternoon, the setting sun flooding the horizon, when he reached a point far up the cañon where it broadened out into a green nest between tall mountains with cool sparkling fords and level stretches, where he again encountered signs of society, enclosed and guarding its rights. From a distance he saw that the house was built close beside the brow of the mountain, surrounded by the live-oaks and sycamores; and, as he came nearer, that it was low, rambling, white, with a broad verandah; in front was a croquet-ground, and at its edge, floating beneath the fern-leaved peppers, was a hammock—ah me, a hammock! To the right of the house ran the dark green groves of orange and lemon, golden fruited and fragrant of volatile blossom; whilst over the hills to the left

ranged the broad open orchards of olive, and the wide-leaved fig, and the vine.

Some one was crossing the ford behind him, and he turned. A small, brown, bare-footed boy on horseback, greeted him in manly fashion as he came up, and then, directly, but with manifest anxiety faltering in his tones, asked: "I don't suppose you are looking for a job, are you, sir?"

"A job? Why, yes—I don't know. Does Mr. Nielsen live here?"

"Yes, sir," the boy smiled, "but my father's not at home. Our man left yesterday and he's gone to town to look for another—some one to watch the bees and run the honey-extractor. Six bits a day and your board."

Sam staggered, and leaned against Solomon. Why, he reflected with amusement, at that price he could stay on indefinitely; himself and his ass and his dog and everything that was his. Six bits a day and found—by the beard of Abraham!

"I'll take it!" he cried with avidity.

The little fellow glanced at him, in momentary approval, quickly giving place, however, to a look of suspicion. "Oh, you needn't think it's a snap, if that's what you're looking for," he admonished. "You know we're used to tramps."

Sam laughed; clearly his employer had been bred to business. But whilst he stood there, bargaining, the strains of the *Wieniawski Legende* floated out to him, and he answered quickly: "No, I'm not looking for that, quite. In fact, I know I should suit you."

"All right, then," and the boy slid off his horse. "I'll look after your things. You go on to the house—supper will be ready pretty soon."

And Sam obeyed, already with a pleasant sense of feeling himself a part of the ranch instead of only a

mere interloper—and with doubtful business at that. Midway to the house, however, he again paused, struck with the scene and its ever changing beauty. In the north, the east, the south, not a cloud to be seen, not yet in the deepening dome whence the stars were beginning to flash. Low down in the western horizon, however, rose the mists of the summer sea, slow-mounting, in grandeur of grays that deepened to pyramid purples and pyres of gold, unfolding in flame, and veiling the mid-horizon with a crimson fleece wherethrough the waning light shone soft and pale, lending a vivid violet-light to the mountains and their loftiest snow-clad peaks silhouetted against the eastern sky.

As he approached the house, the music suddenly broke off and some one stepped out on the porch. And through the deepening rose-light he saw her clearly; the dear little figure gowned in white, grown a trifle stouter perhaps, and the face—with more of the sun's deep brown in her cheeks and the gold that gleamed in her hair; worn again in its natural curl, and reminding him swiftly of the country girl as she had first flown into their office, upsetting all their plans in a flash.

"Sam," she cried, "is it truly you?"

"Little one."

She held out both hands to him, uncertainly, with a little cry; and he—the crushing monopolist!—refused them both, took her in his arms. Yes, he had felt all along it was better than writing!

"But why didn't you let me know?" she asked, releasing herself. "How in the world did you get here—and can you stay—a little while?"

He reassured her. "Oh, yes, I expect to stay all winter."

"Dear me!"

"You see, I've just hired out, this very moment, to—to stay and run the honey-machine."

She burst into laughter. "Truly? Did Tom have the impudence to take you for the new man? How ridiculous!"

An hour later, however, her father returned with a man from town; whereupon his own engagement was set aside, though his welcome was none the less cordial. A large family and a shrewish mother, whence he conjectured that Nannette usually had her hands full. But no, she denied the inference. "You see," she explained, as they rambled over the hills in search of wild-flowers on the following morning, "it is not as it was—the children were little then; now they are able to help themselves and be out of the house. Really, I have far more time to myself than when back in the city."

"But don't you find it a—a little lonesome, at times?" he urged hopefully.

She hesitated a moment. "Yes, perhaps," biting the stem of a flower; "but it's certainly better than back there, where everyone is being drawn down in the whirlpool, and nobody can mention it for fear of being deemed a fanatic. Oh, it all seems like a nightmare sometimes! And I know he was right; he convinced me. Henceforth whenever I look out upon the industrial world where great masses of men are employed at a mere living wage and a few millionaires waxing fat on their produce, I shall see it no more with the innocent eyes of the child—or the stupidly blind. Yet how futile it all was! Then to think of his joining the army, with so many others of the hopeless unemployed—and giving his life at El Caney! Patriotism? Why, situated as he was, it was downright

folly—the last ironical jest of the plutocratic gods that he fought!”

Kent made no reply, went on helping her fill her hands with the violets and forget-me-nots. “Did Enid write you,” he asked, “about my finding his watch for her? You see we advertised for it, after we could get no trace of old Pete. Then one day I met him; he had been ill in some hospital, didn’t even know Kenneth had gone; was seeking him even then. Well, I told him, and the old fellow simply burst into tears like a child. When at last he gave me the watch he pressed the spring and the case flew open. And do you know what he said?”

She glanced up. “I can’t imagine.”

“Well, that was his daughter.”

“His daughter—you mean Kenneth’s mother?”

Kent nodded. He even offered money to Kenneth once, it seems, but the latter refused it. The old man thought he was proud. ‘He thought my money wasn’t honest, señor,’ he complained. ‘*Caramba!* as though there ever were such a thing as honest money!’ A week later I learned of his death.”

“But did he really have money?”

“Oh yes; some fifteen or twenty thousand in cash. I believe it went to some missionary or ‘Don’t Worry’ society. Haven’t you enough of these, little one?”

He stood up, straightened the kink out of his back, kissed the flowers and handed them to her.

THE END.

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